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Wednesday, May 10, 1995

Speaker: The Honourable Gilbert Parent

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 10, 1995

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently the Hamilton–Niagara region hosted a meeting of the environment ministers from the G–7 countries. My work on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs has reinforced for me the necessity of acting on a global level. As nations, our economies and environments are intrinsically linked and must be addressed globally. The G–7 visit gave the Hamilton–Niagara region an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to environmental sustainability.

As a well respected member of the international community, Canada has every reason to be proud of its environmental accomplishments in local communities like Hamilton–Niagara and on a national level. Later this year we will host the G–7 summit in Halifax. This will give us an additional opportunity to show the world Canada's achievements.

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[Translation]

OPÉRATION DIGNITÉ

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, anyone who has watched the activities of Opération Dignité in eastern Quebec knows that it is fully committed to keeping small rural communities alive.

Today, I would like to pay tribute to one of the pioneers of Opération Dignité, Jean–Marc Gendron, who passed away recently. The heart and leader of Dignité II, he inspired people living in rural Quebec to live with dignity. Unfortunately, his relentless work negatively affected his health, which had been deteriorating for many years.

Jean–Marc, you gave your life so that others could take charge of theirs. Everyone living in rural areas thanks you. The founda-

tion you created will ensure that you will never be forgotten. Thank you, Jean–Marc, and long life to all small rural parishes.

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[English]

FORESTRY AND MINING INDUSTRIES

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this week has been declared both national forestry week and national mining week. Last year these two industries jointly provided 421,000 direct Canadian jobs. For 1993, forestry and mining together accounted for \$10 billion more to Canada's balance of trade, meaning exports minus imports, than the combined production of energy, automotive vehicles and parts, agriculture and fishing.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the AGM of the B.C. Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association. Far from being a sunset industry, these people represent world leading companies, which are constantly inventing better ways to use our natural resources with improved environmental safeguards and full cooperation with all who depend on our beautiful but limited land base.

On behalf of all Canadians, I want to thank the forest and mining industries for their continued contribution to making Canada one of the most prosperous nations on earth.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is national forestry week in Canada and I want to bring to Parliament's attention the fact that this year's designated forestry capital of Canada is the town of Meadow Lake in northwest Saskatchewan.

This week Meadow Lake residents are celebrating the occasion in fine style, with events focusing not only on the forest but also on the outdoors, on youth, on children, on seniors and on the community itself.

The Meadow Lake forestry capital society has done a tremendous job to make this special week a successful one within the town. It deserves our support and congratulations.

At the same time, all parliamentarians must take account this week of the value of the forest to Canada's long term economic and environmental security. Forestry work can be well managed at the local and provincial levels, as has been illustrated in

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Meadow Lake. However, there is a real and pressing role for the federal government in forestry matters.

During national forestry week we should renew our national commitment to the forest and all that it embodies.

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LINCOLN HEIGHTS SCHOOL PRODUCTION

Mr. Andrew Telegdi (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the students and teachers of Lincoln Heights school presented "We Canada, Oui", a variety show production in celebration of Canada, on May 3 and 4, 1995. Two hundred and fifty students from kindergarten to grade eight and their teachers recognized the Canadian arts and history by sharing their talents through acting, dancing, singing, and gymnastic displays.

With the Quebec referendum expected sometime this year, teachers Pat Wilson, Nancy Tanguay, and Sue Thorne-McCafrey, coordinators of the show, proposed a theme celebrating Canada for a school-wide production as a way of supporting a united Canada and feeling good about our country. "We Canada, Oui" evolved into a total school effort as teachers and students from all grades at the school worked together and shared in the excitement of creating a performance that blended their efforts and originality with Canadian content and tradition.

The teachers and students of Lincoln Heights school, Waterloo, Ontario, are to be congratulated. The commitment to a united Canada, our youth, and our future are strengthened through efforts such as "We Canada, Oui".

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HOUSING

Mrs. Anna Terrana (Vancouver East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of speaking to the Habitat for Humanity board of directors, whose members were meeting in Ottawa.

Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit organization dedicated to the elimination of poverty housing. Habitat builds homes for low income families, relying on volunteer labour and donated materials from various sources.

[Translation]

Those who qualify for houses are required to pay a reasonable mortgage and the money they pay goes towards the construction of other houses. They must also help build their own and other Habitat houses. To date, Habitat has constructed more than 22,000 houses in 40 countries of the world.

In Vancouver East, my riding, they say that approximately 8,000 people are without acceptable housing. I am pleased to announce that my riding will be the first in British Columbia to have Habitat houses.

[English]

Habitat is truly a humanitarian effort. It is vital that we encourage the initiatives of organizations like Habitat for Humanity.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Reform Party and particularly its immigration critic again demonstrated that they have succumbed to the radical views of the extreme right in the United States.

The Reform critic finally bared his soul, not in the House, not in Canada, but at a right wing rally on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. He finally showed his true colours by sharing a platform with those who are promoting controls against immigrants, who link immigrants to violent crimes, and who accuse immigrants of murdering our children. In the Reform Party critic's comments he linked immigrants to violent crime, which he said is the number one concern of Canadians and Americans.

(1405)

The Reform Party's persistent intolerance brings shame not only to this House but to all of Canada. The Reform Party does not speak on behalf of Canada, and Canadians will make sure that they never will.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Bernard Deshaies (Abitibi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning's *Toronto Star* announced that the CBC's English network is forced to coproduce television shows with foreign companies, especially from the United States. Therefore, we will slowly but surely watch the Americanization of the CBC. This is neither a coincidence nor a deliberate change in the CBC's programming.

Could it be that the budget cuts affecting the English and French networks of the CBC are dramatically reducing the production of Canadian television shows? It is very likely that this is the case. The English network no longer has the means to produce its own shows.

The Liberal government is therefore presiding over the systematic dismemberment of what has long been cherished as a pillar of Canadian culture. The English Canadian culture, with the unwilling help of the CBC, is on its way to becoming a carbon copy of the North American culture.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the answers to my Order Paper Questions 134 and 138 clearly show that the Minister of Justice has no idea if his multi-million-dollar registration system is going to improve public safety, reduce violent crimes, or save lives.

He admitted he does not even know how many crimes have been solved by the 60-year old handgun registration system. He does not know how many seized handguns have been traced to their legal owners. He does not know how many legal handgun owners have been charged with a firearms offence as a result of a successful trace. He does not know how many legal handgun owners had their registrations revoked as a result of being convicted of a violent crime. He does not even know how many registered handguns have been used by registered owners in homicides, suicides, or other firearms-related crimes.

How much more evidence do we have to present before someone in the Liberal cabinet finally wakes up to the fact that the justice minister has not done his homework?

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CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Mr. Barry Campbell (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 14 and 15 the Canadian Jewish Congress will be holding its 24th triennial plenary assembly in Montreal.

One thousand delegates from communities across the country will be gathering to elect the new CJC president, vote on policy resolutions, and participate in workshops and sessions dealing with a wide variety of national and international issues. These issues include anti-Semitism and racism in Canada; domestic social policy issues; national unity; Israel and Jewish communities throughout the world; and a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps.

[Translation]

The theme of the meeting which will be held this weekend is "Going beyond history: Building a better future". The Canadian Jewish Congress, which works with many different communities, is an important non-governmental organization which fights for human rights, among other things. We hope that the CJC's discussions will be fruitful.

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QUEBEC FINANCE MINISTER'S BUDGET

Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Minister of Finance tabled his first budget yesterday.

This budget is a timid step—too timid—towards getting Quebec's finances on a sound footing. In fact, it is quite unfortunate that, for reasons that have to do with the referendum, the real decisions have been postponed until next year.

And what about the statement by the Quebec Minister of Finance that a vote in favour of sovereignty would prevent future tax increases in Quebec? This is, at the very least, an outrageous attempt to blackmail the people of Quebec.

Once again, the Péquistes have shown that no matter how important the items on the government's agenda, they are incapable of rising above petty politicking.

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QUEBEC FINANCE MINISTER'S BUDGET

Mr. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a way I was glad that for once the Quebec government was talking about figures instead of their everlasting refrain about separation.

However, the Péquiste finance minister simply had to make a connection between tax increases and Quebec's constitutional future. Quebecers know perfectly well that separation may cost us a lot of money in taxes. They also realize that the spectre of separation creates an uncertain economic climate.

Let us look with optimism to the future and to the day when the Government of Quebec will be rid of this uncertainty and those who cause it and will consider taxing company profits, not payrolls, in an economy that works.

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(1410)

SITUATION IN SARAJEVO

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with Sarajevo suburbs under intense and brutal bombardment, which has added 11 dead and 40 wounded to the casualty list in this conflict, UN peacekeepers are no longer able to protect the Bosnian capital from future Serbian bombardment since their commanding officer refuses to authorize NATO airstrikes.

We want to express our grave concern about the fact that the UN is powerless to defend this safe area. Need I recall that the Serbs continue to prevent the reopening of Sarajevo Airport, which has been closed to humanitarian flights for one month?

As the UN and NATO do nothing, the noose continues to tighten around Sarajevo, where Serbian tanks have re-entered the 20-kilometre exclusion zone and are firing mortar shells into the heart of the city.

We can only hope that the UN will quickly take control of the situation again, to prevent further casualties.

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[English]

OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when I arrived in Ottawa almost two years ago I decided to make a concentrated effort to support the government whenever I thought it was doing the right thing. I gladly rise today to partially fulfil that pledge.

Reformers believe the duty of elected members to their constituents should supersede their obligations to their political parties. Three Liberal members recently adhered to those principles. I would like to congratulate the members for Kent, Huron—Bruce, and Timiskaming—French River for their commitment to the voters in their ridings.

Unfortunately, other Liberal members of Ontario have yet to illustrate the same commitment. They will be given the opportunity in the near future. Hopefully their ridings will be foremost in their minds at that time.

As long as the voters take second place to partisan politics in this House, the old saying about safety in numbers will not apply to Ontario's voice in Ottawa.

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ONTARIO ELECTION

Mr. Sarkis Assadourian (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 8, 1995, Ontario voters will be going to the polls to elect a new provincial government. This time they will do it right.

In 1993 we promised to restore hope to Canadians while creating jobs and building a strong economy. The red book outlined some of these campaign promises. Over the last 18 months the Prime Minister has governed with integrity and honesty, as he said he would.

Last week Lyn McLeod unveiled the Ontario Liberal plan, reiterating that her party's top priority is to get Ontario working again after five years of NDP misery. On June 8 Premier McLeod will be able to put the Liberal plan into action, as we did 18 months ago.

I wish Lyn McLeod and all the members of the Liberal team success in their campaigns. On June 8 I will be supporting my provincial representative, Elinor Caplan, MPP for Oriole.

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ONTARIO ELECTION

Mr. Andy Mitchell (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certain things always seem to go together: warm

weather and barbecues, summer cottagers and Muskoka, an election in Ontario and a Liberal plan that works for the voters.

Municipalities across Ontario have benefited tremendously by our federal job creation initiatives, and specifically by the Canada—Ontario infrastructure program. When Lyn McLeod is premier of this province, Ontarians stand to benefit even more. Lyn McLeod and her Liberal team are committed to job creation and will work in partnership with the federal government to achieve the objectives of the infrastructure program.

The infrastructure program has been a resounding success. More than 14,000 jobs will be created in this province. All projects previously approved under the program will proceed fully funded and on schedule. That is the mark of good leadership, the mark that Lyn McLeod will bring to this province on June 8.

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VETERANS

Mr. Jag Bhaduria (Markham—Whitchurch—Stouffville, Ind. Lib.): Mr. Speaker, celebrations were recently held all across Canada and in parts of Europe honouring the thousands of veterans who fought in the second world war.

In my constituency I was privileged to take part in ceremonies held in Markham and Stouffville commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of the second world war. It was indeed an honour to meet with these veterans and talk about their many memories of the battles that were fought.

During these conversations an extremely disturbing problem was brought to my attention by a group of veterans. They informed me that the Sunnybrook Medical Centre Veterans' Wing, located in Toronto, has recently raised the monthly in-residence rent by 35 per cent. This is having a major impact on some 300 veterans who reside in this clinic. I was extremely saddened by this news. These veterans gave the ultimate gift to our country and now they seem to be left to fend for themselves.

(1415)

I urge the government to immediately intervene in the matter. These veterans simply cannot afford such a dramatic increase in their cost of living expenses.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, before we begin question period, I would like to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of Dr. Alfred Sant, Leader of the Official Opposition of Malta.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[Translation]***TRANSFER PAYMENTS**

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in his budget speech, the Quebec Minister of Finance brought home the negative impact of the massive cuts to the federal transfer payments used to fund social programs, which were announced in February's budget. While hastening its financial withdrawal, Ottawa intends to maintain its national standards, indeed impose new ones.

The Quebec Minister of Finance said yesterday, and I quote: "By the end of the decade, the federal government will no longer be making any transfer payments to Quebec for social programs. In fact, Quebec will be making payments to the federal government".

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Would the minister confirm the conclusion reached by his Quebec counterpart to the effect that the massive cuts made in his most recent budget to transfer payments to the provinces to fund social programs will mean a shortfall of \$650 million next year for Quebec and of \$1.9 billion in 1997-98, if the federal government continues its practice of allocation on a per capita basis, as he himself has said?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have discussed this repeatedly. The shortfall next year will be \$350 million. As regards the following year, we will have discussions and negotiations to decide how we will allocate federal transfers to the provinces.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised by the deficits we are running up, because the Minister of Finance seems unable to count. He continues to deny figures that are perfectly clear, figures arrived at through his own budget calculations.

Would the minister acknowledge that, as of 1999, in four years' time, Quebec will no longer receive any transfer payments for social programs, but will in fact have to send a cheque to Ottawa for the Canada social transfer paid to other provinces?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ages ago, discussions were held between the provinces and the federal government, and tax points were transferred to the provinces as the result of these discussions. Quebec in fact received more tax points than other provinces.

However, the Minister of Human Resources Development, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and I have clearly indi-

cated our intention to begin negotiations with the provinces to enable both the federal government and the provinces to straighten out and stabilize public finances.

Now, as to the first point, where the Leader of the Opposition was finding fault with my figures, I would suggest that, if he does not agree with equalization payments, he should say so. However, if he agrees that Quebec benefits enormously from equalization payments, he will acknowledge that my figures are valid.

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I were the minister, I would feel somewhat embarrassed about alluding to equalization payments, given that his first act in January 1994 was to cap equalization payments thereby depriving the provinces of \$1.5 billion over the next five years.

The minister acknowledges that the federal government is hastening its withdrawal from transfer payments for social programs. Under these conditions, how can he talk seriously of a cost effective and flexible federal system, when he will be depriving Quebec of \$2.5 billion over the next two years and when Ottawa will no longer pay a cent to fund social programs by 1999, all the while maintaining its tax base and claiming to set national standards in Quebec?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition keeps getting these misleading figures, which have no basis in reality. Perhaps they help his argument. Some of his figures are global, but, as we have already said, we are going to have to negotiate with the provinces individually.

(1420)

As for equalization payments, we have signed the agreement with the provinces. In other words, we have succeeded in reaching an agreement, something the previous government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was a member, had refused to do during its term of office.

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KREVER COMMISSION

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

According to a midday report by the CBC's Johanne McDuff, the Krever Commission was told that, in the 1980s, Connaught Laboratories, the Canadian blood fractionation centre, got their blood product supplies from the United States and that most of the blood came from prison inmates in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, who are very high risk donors. To hide this fact, Connaught Laboratories put Canadian Red Cross labels on these products.

Oral Questions

Given the seriousness of these revelations, does the minister intend to intercede with her colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, to get him to lay criminal charges against those who falsified products knowingly or were involved in these manipulations which had tragic consequences?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking these matters very seriously. We put aside \$12 million for the Krever inquiry commission, and we want to wait for Justice Krever's report on the problems experienced with the blood supply system in the 1980s.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have had enough of the minister's irresponsible, thoughtless rhetoric in this matter.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Picard: Given the seriousness of this morning's revelations, does the minister not realize that she must take immediate action against those responsible for this scandal?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not seem to understand how serious it is to ask a judge to conduct an inquiry. We must not interfere in these proceedings. It is up to Justice Krever to reach these decisions and to make representations to us before submitting his final report if he sees fit to do so.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on legislation that affects traditional aboriginal hunting rights, the federal government has a constitutional obligation to consult in a prescribed manner with the James Bay Cree and the native bands of Yukon.

Section 24.4.26 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement states that all regulations relating to the hunting, fishing and trapping regime proposed by responsible governments shall be submitted to the co-ordinating committee defined in the agreement for advice prior to enactment.

Yesterday it became quite clear that the Minister of Justice failed to consult the James Bay Cree or the aboriginal people in Yukon on his proposed gun control bill in the prescribed manner. According to the Liberal chair of the justice committee this makes the entire legislative process unconstitutional.

Will the Minister of Justice put his bill on hold until he has consulted the James Bay Cree and the Yukon First Nations on his gun control bill in the prescribed manner?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I record my astonishment that such a question would emerge from the party that to date has refused to meet with aboriginal people, describing them as a special interest group.

That such a question would emerge from a party that has voted against every single piece of legislation introduced in the House to advance aboriginal rights and that less than a year ago voted against legislation giving rights of self-government to the Indians in Yukon to which the leader has referred.

The record will show that I consulted throughout the country before preparing the proposals that are engendered in Bill C-68. In addition to the consultations carried out in advance of the legislation, we have already put in place an elaborate and unprecedented process of consultation with the aboriginal leadership and communities throughout the country.

(1425)

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, when the minister introduced his gun control bill he said, as he said again today, that it was the result of the most extensive consultative process known to man. He had consulted everyone from Elvis Presley to the ghost of Mackenzie King.

The evidence is now mounting to suggest the minister's information tour was neither extensive nor substantive in many instances. He forgot the legal requirements of the James Bay Cree agreement and the provincial politicians in Alberta and Saskatchewan say the minister's consultations were a joke.

Has the minister assessed the damage that can now be done to federal-provincial and aboriginal relations if the government rams through this defective bill in its present form?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for a period of almost one year I have met with individuals, groups, associations and representatives of governments at all levels in the country to discuss firearms' control. That consultation has been complete and entirely in accordance with our legal and constitutional responsibilities.

To listen to the leader of the third party one would conclude that to him consultation means doing exactly what he would have us do. In fact, the consultations in which we have participated over this last year have resulted in a bill which is respectful of and responsive to the needs of aboriginal peoples, among others, in the country.

We will proceed with the legislation which is very much in the public interest.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, these allegations of deficiencies in the consultative process are coming from the Attorney General of Alberta, the

Oral Questions

Attorney General of Saskatchewan and representatives of the James Bay Cree.

What we have here with respect to gun control is yet another top down, made in Ottawa solution to a problem; the NEP, like the Charlottetown accord, like the TAGS program and a whole bunch of others. They start with an allegedly high level of consultation and high levels of support which then diminish as the provinces and the people get a look at the content and discover the flaws.

Is the minister willing even at this late date to listen and respond by incorporating legitimate concerns of Alberta, Saskatchewan, the James Bay Cree, the Yukon First Nations into his gun control proposals?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the contradictions in the hon. member's position are almost too numerous to identify in these brief moments.

Let me begin by observing that he is hardly in a position to champion aboriginal rights in the House of Commons. Second, this is the party of law and order that in not supporting Bill C-68, stands against the chiefs of police and frontline police officers.

This is the party that would have us listen to the people. The Attorney General of Alberta comes to this city and tells us he opposes gun control when his own public opinion poll shows that two out of every three people in his province are in favour of it.

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[Translation]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the Quebec Minister of Finance announced yesterday that the Quebec government intended to implement a series of measures to give the province a real policy on manpower training, he requested that the unemployment insurance premiums levied in Quebec be reduced, and I quote: "These premiums are at any rate too high, given that the unemployment insurance fund is now in a surplus position and that the federal government is using some of the premiums to intervene in programs which are in fact our responsibility".

(1430)

Does the Minister of Finance intend to follow up on his counterpart's urgent request to reduce the unemployment insurance contributions of Quebec businesses, which would prove that he is dedicated to job creation and that the federal government is moving towards withdrawing from the sector of manpower training?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of Quebec's business community clearly indicated at our meetings with them that they preferred to accumulate a surplus in their fund to ensure that there will be no need to increase premiums during the next economic downturn, like what happened during the last one. Such is our intention. We would certainly like to reduce them, but we would also like to keep them at that level once they are reduced.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand by the Minister of Finance's evasive reply that he will continue to skim money from the unemployment insurance fund, to use the huge surpluses that he is generating by setting premiums too high to increasingly interfere in a sector where he has no business being and stifle Quebec's job creation efforts?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my answer seemed evasive, I will repeat it. It is the members of the business community in Canada, in Quebec, and in Montreal who asked us not to lower the premiums, but to create a surplus in the unemployment insurance fund, because they do not want to have to increase premiums during the next economic downturn, as such increases are a real hindrance to job creation.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on December 7, 1994, in answer to a question regarding the extent to which the justice minister had consulted with the provincial attorneys general on Bill C-68, the justice minister stated in the House:

Consultation was engaged continuously with officials in the offices of every provincial and territorial attorneys general, every one of them.

The attorneys general of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Yukon have flatly denied there was any serious consultation, let alone continuous consultation.

Will the justice minister explain the enormous contradiction between his statement to the House and the declarations of these attorneys general?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the statement that I made on December 7 was true then and it is true now.

The officials in provincial governments were kept abreast throughout the process last year. They were told exactly the proposals that were under consideration. The paper of November 30 came as no surprise to any of them.

Oral Questions

In so far as the province of Alberta is concerned, we already know from the attorney general's poll in that province that two-thirds of the people of Alberta support the proposals.

As far as Saskatchewan is concerned, I suggest the hon. member wait until after the election in that province in June at which point this will become a lot less significant for that government.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have a good idea of what happened in Manitoba where the Liberals lost 50 per cent of their seats.

Aboriginal representatives from Yukon as well as the James Bay Cree claim a constitutional right to be consulted in the prescribed manner before the enactment of Bill C-68. Both groups claim consultation in the prescribed manner never took place. The James Bay Cree indicate their letters to the justice minister regarding the matter were never even answered.

How does the minister explain the violation of the constitutional rights of these aboriginal peoples?

(1435)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, neither the Department of Justice nor the government has any lessons to learn from the hon. member with respect to consulting aboriginal people.

During the course of past months I have visited the Inuit in the Northwest Territories. I have travelled to Yukon. I have been to the northern parts of every province to speak with aboriginal communities to learn their concerns and their perspectives on the issue.

I urge the hon. member to do exactly the same. Let him learn as I have the perspective of aboriginal communities. He will learn as I have the appalling fact that firearms are the leading cause of accidents and death in many of these communities.

We are confident we have complied with every constitutional obligation for consultation. That consultation continues and it will.

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[Translation]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is launching a series of pilot projects at Canada Employment Centres in Quebec. In Jonquière, for instance, we have one of the first single-wicket operations, where the federal government wants to control manpower training by bringing all agencies that provide manpower training under the aegis of the Canada Employment Centre.

My question is directed to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Does the minister realize that his government's pilot project directly contradicts a consensus in Quebec on the need

for transferring manpower training to Quebec, and that this is an instance of direct provocation aimed at the Quebec government?

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

The hon. member should know that the federal government has co-operated a great deal with the provincial governments throughout Canada. As a matter of fact, there are proposals tabled with the provinces that speak to the clarification of the responsibilities of both the federal and provincial governments to arrive at the delivery of a more efficient system so that at the end of the day the people of Canada, whether they live in Quebec or outside Quebec, can have the best possible service.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs must know that the most important mechanism in this respect in Quebec is the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'oeuvre. Would the minister agree that setting up an entirely new federal manpower network is a clear indication that Ottawa has no intention of transferring manpower training to Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is interested in an intelligent discussion of the issue, perhaps he should know that Human Resources Development Canada had approximately 50,000 labour market contracts in Quebec; 9,600 contracts with non-profit organizations; 9,300 contracts with private sector firms; and 2,800 contracts with public sector organizations.

The point I am making is that there is a need to deal with these individuals. At the end of the day Quebecers will realize that there is a role for the federal government to play in co-operation with the provinces and local organizations.

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GUN CONTROL

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Indian affairs.

Since the minister was instrumental in establishing a modern agreement with the natives of Yukon, why has he not insisted on consultation with the justice department in the creation of Bill C-68?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last September I had the privilege of visiting the Yukon territory, meeting with representatives of the Council for Yukon Indians, discussing with them their perspective on firearms, reviewing the options, going to communities like Kwanlun Dun outside Whitehorse, meeting with members of those communities, talking about the way

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firearms are used as tools, talking about community needs and becoming sensitive to perspectives of the aboriginal communities on the issues.

That perspective is reflected in Bill C-68. I point out, as the hon. member will know as a member of the committee that is considering it, that section 110(t) of Bill C-68 provides expressly that provision can be made for the manner in which the bill is implemented in aboriginal communities, including those in Yukon.

(1440)

That is the kind of approach we think is right to achieve community safety while respecting the aboriginal perspective.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, he is talking about something once it becomes law. I guess the real problem is that big city lawyers do not understand the word consultation.

According to the agreements consultation must take place when any legislation may have an impact on hunting and trapping activities. It seems strange to me that consultation takes place after the legislation has received second reading.

Is the minister prepared to listen to the recommendations of Yukon natives who say to stop the proceedings until the proper procedures are followed?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, September of last year was some five months before the bill was tabled in the House. That was consultation before the tabling of legislation.

As far as the point of view of the people of Yukon is concerned, the committee of which the hon. member is a part is now listening in detail to the evidence of witnesses. I have no doubt they will have proposals to make to improve the legislation, but in the final analysis the government remains persuaded that the bill, its provisions and its approach, is exactly what is needed to enhance community safety throughout the country.

* * *

*[Translation]***AGUSTA**

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works.

In the matter of the cancellation of the contract to purchase EH-101 helicopters worth nearly \$6 billion, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works confirmed in April that the government was now negotiating with Agusta the

amount of compensation it would have to pay the E.H. Industries consortium.

Would the minister of public works agree that the government should stop all negotiations with Agusta and conduct a judicial investigation into the circumstances around the awarding of the EH-101 contract, considering the many serious charges of corruption and misappropriation of funds pending against Agusta in Europe?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): No, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at least the minister is consistent.

How can the minister justify continuing talks with Agusta without first investigating the actions of this company as demanded by the Minister of Human Resources Development in April 1993? Does his answer mean that the government is prepared to turn a blind eye and negotiate compensation payments that may be as much as several hundred million dollars? What is at the bottom of this?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, a contract was consummated. A contract has now been nullified. We are in the process of negotiating that contract. When it is complete the House will become aware of its details.

* * *

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

The issue of investment is extremely important to small and medium size businesses. They may not be interested on that side, but the issue of investment is extremely important across Atlantic Canada.

Given recent media coverage of the meeting of the minister with the four Atlantic premiers and the chartered banks on a proposed Atlantic investment fund, will the minister now inform the House on the status of the proposal?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon.

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member for the unexpected question and share with members of the House that the Atlantic region is the only region of the country that does not have a venture capital fund.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and the four Atlantic premiers I met with representatives of the chartered banks. We had a very comprehensive and detailed discussion on such a proposed fund as an Atlantic venture capital fund. We assured representatives of the banks, I on behalf of the Government of Canada and the premiers on behalf of the provincial jurisdictions, that in no way would governments want to operate such a fund as the Atlantic venture capital fund.

As a result a working committee has been struck. It is being led by the president of ACOA. We are working on a regular basis with the banks.

(1445)

I hope in due course I will be able to come back to the House and provide more details relating to the Atlantic venture capital fund enhancing opportunities for businesses in Atlantic Canada.

* * *

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the solicitor general stated that he could not confirm the assertion that Luke Desilets was recruited to CSIS to spy on the Aryan nations because he was respecting the law that was passed by this Parliament.

However, previous solicitors general have publicly identified Warren Hart, Claude Morin and Marc Boivin as RCMP security service or CSIS sources. These ministers stated that they were at liberty to do so because these individuals had identified themselves as human sources. Luke Desilets also identified himself as a human source for CSIS.

Will the minister now follow in the tradition of these previous ministers and confirm that Luke Desilets was a CSIS source?

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we very well know, the matter is currently being investigated by CSIS. I am not at liberty to comment on the operations of CSIS.

I should add there is also SIRC which has the mandate to look into this and possibly make a recommendation to the government and to the service in relation to this matter as raised by the opposition member.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the minister, through the parliamentary secretary, continues to hide behind section 18 of the CSIS Act. If he would read down to section 18, paragraph 2, he would see that Parliament also gave him the authority to reveal the identity of a source just like his predecessors did.

The solicitor general still appears reluctant to use the power at his disposal. I ask the parliamentary secretary: Is it the intention of this government to be even more secretive than the previous Conservative government?

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CSIS has a specific mandate to look into any problems that might arise in so far as it concerns the security of Canada. This is one allegation we are looking into. I can assure the hon. member that we have a process in place. It is working. It has worked in the past and I am sure it will work in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

HIGH SPEED TRAIN

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. On November 1, 1991, the Transport ministers of Canada, Quebec and Ontario announced they would share the cost of a \$6 million feasibility study on operating a high speed train similar to the TGV in the Quebec—Windsor corridor. This study was to be finished not later than November 1993, and the agreement between the three governments expired on March 31, 1994.

Since the study has yet to be submitted to the minister, could he explain why the report has been delayed for more than 16 months and tell us what he is doing or intends to do to put an end to this unacceptable situation?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question. It is a rather tricky situation. Since three governments are involved—the Government of Quebec, the Government of Ontario and the federal government—a consensus among all three governments is essential before the study is submitted to the responsible minister and published.

Discussions are continuing to see if we can reach a consensus on the report. In fact, our deputy minister met his Quebec counterpart not long ago, and the change of ministers in Ontario may have delayed things as well.

We are still waiting for all three governments to agree so there will be at least a consensus on the issue.

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux—Montagnes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the Minister of Transport.

Considering the studies he already has, including the joint study by Quebec and Ontario, why will the minister not at least take a preliminary position on this high speed train project which, first of all, would provide us with expertise that would be eminently exportable; second, would create thousands of jobs,

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and third, would be financed to a considerable extent by the private sector?

(1450)

The Speaker: Hon. members, I will give the minister the floor but I would like to point out that a question does not have three or four parts. It is one question. The Minister of Transport.

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that we are all anxious to get to the end of this exercise. It has been a costly one. There have been a lot of studies. There has been a lot of expense on the parts of the Government of Ontario, the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada.

It would be highly irregular after all the time and effort put into this by three governments to have the Government of Canada set out its policy unilaterally. That is one of the things I hear my hon. friends in the opposition refer to constantly as being an improper way for the Government of Canada to act. When we consult and try to arrive at a consensus, it is not acceptable. When we try to dictate terms, it is not acceptable. We will just do the best we can to bring this to a conclusion as quickly as we can.

* * *

MINISTERIAL REGIONAL OFFICES

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, we have been provided more evidence of how the Liberals go about giving the impression they are meeting their promises in the red book.

One of the promises was to cut \$10 million from ministerial offices. We have a document to all ministers from Treasury Board dated April 27. It states that although current policy requires that 100 per cent of the costs of regional offices be charged to ministerial budgets "indications are that some departments have been absorbing these charges", not the ministerial budget.

Would the President of the Treasury Board tell the House which departments are engaged in the cooking of the books, which is illegal according to the Financial Administration Act?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise to the question is all wrong. The government did cut \$10 million from ministerial budgets, including the office of the Prime Minister. As led by that commitment, it has made those cuts.

The ministerial regional offices continue to be operated in a way that is most cost efficient and will be subject to further cost efficiencies in the future. The minister of public works indicated

the other day that we have closed a number of them already. They are all being handled in a proper fashion.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic that the President of the Treasury Board said that.

I want to quote again from this document we have. "The cost sharing will in effect allow ministers to respend the amount thus saved. This will result in an increase to the costs of running ministers' offices".

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Since the Prime Minister's office provided concurrence on this financial sleight of hand designed to fool the taxpayers, will the Prime Minister now come clean and table a full report showing which ministers' offices are practising these hocus-pocus politics?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again the preamble is all wrong.

These ministerial regional offices are provided not only for ministers who are resident in the cities in which they are located but also for visiting ministers to conduct government business. The Treasury Board continues to examine the operation of these facilities. It will be making changes to ensure that they continue as in the past to be operated in the most cost efficient fashion.

* * *

NEWFOUNDLAND DOCKYARD

Mrs. Bonnie Hickey (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

There is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the future of the Newfoundland dockyard. Currently only a few tradespersons are working at the dry dock, down from 850 last year. Given the importance of the dockyard to the economy of St. John's will the minister inform the House about his plans for the dockyard?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question of the dockyards in St. John's is one that has been discussed very thoroughly.

We have advised the president of Marine Atlantic to look into the commercialization of all the activities of Marine Atlantic, including the dockyard at St. John's.

The future of the dockyards at St. John's lies completely in the hands of the management of Marine Atlantic and especially the workers at that facility. We lost in excess of \$3 million there last year. We do not intend to have that happen again.

(1455)

Unless we can find a buyer for the dockyards at St. John's or a better solution than what we have been able to come up with so far, there will be no alternative but to close it. I hope that will not be the result of the work we have undertaken there. The board of directors and the president of Marine Atlantic have been given a

Oral Questions

very clear directive that we have to commercialize the activities of that entire operation. That includes the dockyard at St. John's.

* * *

[Translation]

BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Part III of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture provides that, and I quote: "Dairy policy is expected to be a focus of analysis in 1995-96 and will cover the impact of the introduction of recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST) in Canada".

In view of the fact that available studies appear not to contain sufficient information to permit the marketing of the hormone and that the Department of Health has not announced any change in this regard, how does the minister explain the hormone's expected arrival on the scene this year?

[English]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman is perhaps misinterpreting that particular phrase used in part III of the estimates.

Obviously the issue of RBST use in Canada is under investigation at the present time in two different forums. One is the established legal regulatory forum which is under the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Minister of Health. As I understand it the appropriate officials in the Department of Health have not yet arrived at any determination as to what some future decision may or may not be with respect to RBST use in Canada.

Last year a second analysis was undertaken quite apart and independent from the regulatory jurisdiction of the Department of Health. That study was initiated by the agriculture committee of the House of Commons. It held public hearings and made a number of recommendations, including the proposal that whatever the regulatory decision of the Department of Health might turn out to be that at least for a one-year period the potential use of RBST in Canada ought to be delayed.

Some hon. members: Time.

Mr. Goodale: We negotiated that delay with the companies. A task force has been analysing a variety of questions in the meantime. That task force report has been submitted to me. I have provided a copy of the task force report—

Some hon. members: Order.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of a letter sent to the minister of Indian affairs on March 21 by members of the Yellow Quill band in Saskatchewan. In it there are serious allegations regarding the misuse of band assets, capital project funding and housing moneys. As of February 14 the band was running a \$2 million deficit. Band members have called upon the minister to uphold his fiduciary obligation and make their chief and council account for all spending.

The minister has had this letter for a month and a half and his officials have known about this problem for much longer. What has the minister done about it?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister of Indian affairs I will take the question under advisement.

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SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

As he will know, under Bill C-76 the Canada social transfer section clearly is a fundamental restructuring of Canada and of our national health care and social programs. A United Nations committee has expressed concern. I do not believe that anywhere in the very much mentioned Liberal red book was it suggested to the Canadian public that we would fundamentally adopt a Reform Party policy in transferring these programs to the provinces.

Given the fundamental restructuring that this section on the Canadian social transfer represents, would he appoint an independent commission? We have done this in the past with the Hall commission and the Macdonald commission. It could study this particular section and come back truly with an independent view of what this means for the future of Canada.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has already happened a couple of times today, the premise of the question is absolutely wrong.

The fact is that the CHST enables the federal government along with the provincial governments to maintain in place a sustainable and highly progressive set of social programs.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

(1500)

The Canadian health and social transfer enables the federal government to keep its covenant with Canadians that there will be no residency requirement for welfare and its even greater covenant that the principles of the Canada Health Act will never be taken away from us.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Mr. John O'Reilly (Victoria—Haliburton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Throughout its history Canada has benefited from periodic infusions of capital investment from countries across the globe. In recent years however, foreign investors have viewed Canadian markets with some reluctance.

Can the minister inform the House what is being done to improve the attractiveness of Canada to foreign investors?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is dead on.

It is very important for Canada to maintain a good climate for investment. That means a sound balance sheet. That is why we are so pleased the budget of last February was so well received by the international markets and by Canadians.

At the same time we have to recognize that as a low inflation country for which we paid a very dear penalty we must maintain the tremendous asset of low inflation and very high productivity of our workforce.

We must congratulate the Minister of Human Resources Development for this transition from passive to active support. The new industrial policy is trade policy with the trade mission of the Prime Minister. I would congratulate my colleague the Minister for International for International Trade.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I wish to draw to your attention the presence in the gallery of a Canadian ski legend. She was a gold and silver medalist in the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble, France.

Nancy Greene-Raine, you honour this House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 42 petitions.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

Mr. Maurice Dumas (Argenteuil—Papineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as deputy chair of the Canadian Group, Inter-Parliamentary Union, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Group, Inter-Parliamentary Union.

This is the report of Canada's official delegation to the 93rd Inter-Parliament Conference held in Madrid, Spain, from March 27 to April 1, 1995.

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*[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the 76th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the selection of votable items in accordance with Standing Order 92.

Those items are Bill S-7 in the name of the hon. member for Brant; Bill C-316, the hon. member for Cambridge; Bill C-319, the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest; Bill C-267, the hon. member for Québec; Motion No. 382, the hon. member for Mississauga South and Motion No. 381, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

This report is deemed adopted on presentation.

While I am on my feet I also have the pleasure to present the 77th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[Translation]

It is about the form used in the Journals of the House of Commons for the Speaker's tabling of supply bills for royal assent.

Routine Proceedings

(1505)

PETITIONS

VOICE MAIL

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am submitting two petitions signed by over 500 people from my riding and from neighbouring regions.

Given that seniors are generally at a loss when faced with voice mail technology, and considering that they need personalized service, especially regarding their enquiries on guaranteed income, these petitioners demand that the government suspend implementation of voice mail for seniors' services and maintain the personalized services that they so require, as the Bloc Québécois has already demanded several times.

[*English*]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have 15 petitions.

The first five petitions contain 324 signatures. The petitioners pray that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the next five petitions contain 456 signatures.

The petitioners pray that Parliament not repeal or amend section 241 of the Criminal Code in any way to uphold the Supreme Court of Canada decision of September 30, 1993 to disallow suicide and euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the final five petitions contain 475 signatures.

The petitioners pray and request that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I wish to present a petition that has been circulating across Canada.

This particular petition has been signed by a number of petitioners from the Lethbridge, Alberta area. The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that managing

the family home and caring for preschool children is an honourable profession which has not been recognized for its value to our society.

They also state that the Income Tax Act discriminates against families that make the choice to provide care in the home to preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill and the aged.

The petitioners therefore pray and call on Parliament to pursue initiatives to eliminate tax discrimination against families that decide to provide care in the home for preschool children, the disabled, the chronically ill and the aged.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions that I am pleased to present in the House today on behalf of the constituents of Yorkton—Melville.

The petitioners state that Canadians are already overburdened with taxation due to high government spending. As the Saskatchewan government is on the verge of balancing its budget, allowing Saskatchewan taxpayers to see the light at the end of the tunnel, the petitioners request that Parliament reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes.

Those who signed these petitions urge the government to please consider this.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have another 52 petitions which are all very similar. They are signed by over 1,200 people from the provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan, including my riding of Yorkton—Melville.

All the people who signed these petitions are concerned about the public safety of all Canadians and feel that the existing controls on law-abiding, responsible firearms' owners are more than enough to ensure that safety.

They therefore call on Parliament to support laws that will severely punish all violent criminals who use weapons in the commission of a crime, to support new Criminal Code firearms control provisions that recognize and protect the right of law-abiding citizens to own and use recreational firearms, and to support legislation that would repeal or modify existing gun control laws which have not improved public safety or have proven not to be cost effective or have proven to be overly complex so as to be ineffective or unenforceable.

(1510)

JUSTICE

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise again to present another petition in this course of action undertaken on behalf of constituents who wish to halt the early release from prison of Robert Paul Thompson.

The petitioners I represent are concerned about making our streets safer for our citizens. They are opposed to the current practice of early release of violent offenders prior to serving the full extent of their sentences.

The petitioners pray that our streets will be made safer for law-abiding citizens and the families of the victims of convicted murderers.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House petitions from my constituents of Langley and Abbotsford, British Columbia.

The first petition asks Parliament to ensure that the present provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada prohibiting assisted suicide be enforced vigorously and that Parliament make no change in the law which would sanction or allow the aiding or abetting of suicide or active or passive euthanasia.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition asks that Parliament not amend the human rights code, the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval of same sex relationships or of homosexuality, including amending the human rights code to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 36, I would like to present two petitions from the residents of my constituency.

The first petition is from residents of the Caslan-Boyle area. The petitioners ask that Parliament achieve a balanced budget through reductions in government spending rather than tax increases.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of the community of Athabasca.

The petitioners ask that Parliament not amend the Canadian Human Rights Act or the charter of rights and freedoms in any way which would tend to indicate societal approval for same sex relationships or homosexuality, including amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include in the prohibited grounds of discrimination the undefined phrase sexual orientation.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions dealing with the firearms legislation, one with wording very similar to that of the petition presented by the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Routine Proceedings

The second petition calls on Parliament not to accept the justice minister's anti-firearms proposal and insists that he instead bring forward legislation to convict and punish criminals rather than the innocent.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have a third petition to present, again from the residents of Kootenay West—Revelstoke.

The petitioners call on the government to reduce government spending instead of increasing taxes.

I trust all members will keep that in mind when we vote this afternoon.

JUSTICE

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present three petitions today.

Two of the petitions ask Parliament that in light of the murders of Melanie Carpenter, Pamela Cameron, Jesse Cadman and many others, to make the following changes in the criminal justice system: to rescind the mandatory release legislation where violent offenders are involved; to ensure all information about violent offenders, including prior offences and refusal to enrol in treatment programs is provided to those making decisions on release of parole; and to separate violent offenders from society until it can be proven they will not reoffend.

I concur with the petition.

GUN CONTROL

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is signed by 68 residents of Surrey and the surrounding area.

The petitioners request that Parliament reject the justice minister's gun control proposal and call on the minister instead to bring forward proposals which will enable the police and the courts to deal quickly and firmly with perpetrators of violent crimes of all types.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, questions Nos. 162 and 165 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 162—**Mr. Harper (Simcoe Centre):**

What was the cost of the advertisement placed by the FBDB on pages 80 and 81 of the December 5, 1994, issue of MacLean's magazine, what are the criteria for the purchase of advertising by the FBDB, and how much money was spent on (a) magazine, (b) newspaper, (c) radio, and (d) television advertising by the FBDB in each year since 1988?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): There was no Federal Business Development Bank (FBDB) advertisement placed on pages 80 and 81 of the December 5, 1994 edition of Maclean's.

FBDB placed an advertisement on page 49 of the November 28 edition and on page 101 of the November 14 edition. Both were part of FBDB's national advertising campaign. The November 28 advertisement was free, *i.e.*, at not cost to the FBDB.

The regular price for an advertisement like the one full page, four colour, that appeared in the November 14 edition of Maclean's is \$27,480. The actual cost to FBDB for that ad was \$23,076, representing 19 per cent off the regular price.

It should be noted that FBDB advertising is entirely paid for by the bank, which operates on a full cost-recovery basis in its financial services.

In its last examination report to the FBDB 1993, the office of the auditor general noted that the bank lacked comprehensive plans for marketing its services. To address this concern and achieve its objectives related to the complementary lender role of the bank, the bank seeks the expertise of external experts to develop, co-ordinate and implement national advertising campaigns, in order to maximize its impact with target audiences and minimize its costs.

Therefore, the purpose of FBDB advertising is to accurately and timely inform as many small and medium sized businesses as possible and potential entrepreneurs of the availability and nature of the innovative financing and management products and services offered by FBDB.

FBDB national advertising is limited to print, media, such as magazines and newspapers. FBDB does not advertise on a national basis on radio or television.

A smaller annual budget is allocated to each of the bank's 78 branches nation wide for the placement of local advertising in their community. Branch managers typically use the most effective local print media for reaching small and medium sized businesses and promoting local financing and management services programs offered by the bank. Exceptionally, a very small proportion of local radio advertising may be used. No television is used.

As mentioned, there is no national advertising on radio and television and only print media are used. A specific breakdown, along the categories listed above, is not recorded. Total amounts spent during past fiscal years since 1988 are as follows:

Fiscal Year	National Campaign	Local Advertising
1988	\$1,136,918	\$403,423
1989	\$1,191,412	\$510,955
1990	\$967,939	\$314,797
1991	\$1,374,337	\$343,924

Fiscal Year	National Campaign	Local Advertising
1992	\$920,019	\$298,011
1993	\$525,241	\$309,906
1994	\$373,606	\$247,203

Total amounts spent for fiscal year 1995 are not yet available.

Question No. 165—Mr. Hanger:

What were the acceptance versus rejection rates of each of the Immigration and Refugee Board regional hearing offices in December 1994 and January 1995 versus the same period a year earlier?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):

Regions	December 1993		December 1994	
	% Accepted	% Rejected	% Accepted	% Rejected
Ottawa/ Atlantic	84	16	88	12
Quebec	64	36	76	24
Ontario I	48	52	76	24
Ontario II	54	46	78	22
Prairies	53	47	87	13
B.C.	53	47	83	17
Regions	January 1994		January 1995	
	% Accepted	% Rejected	% Accepted	% Rejected
Ottawa/ Atlantic	93	7	94	6
Quebec	70	30	73	27
Ontario I	53	47	81	19
Ontario II	62	38	71	29
Prairies	60	40	92	8
B.C.	47	53	84	16

[English]

Mr. Milliken: I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On April 26, 1994 I submitted Question No. 40 on the Order Paper regarding government grants to businesses. I asked for an answer within 45 days.

Ways and Means

I will ask again. When will the government please give me an answer to this question?

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, the government has been working assiduously on trying to get a response to the hon. member's question.

(1515)

In fairness to the government—and I acknowledge that the delay has been significant in this case—the hon. member must be aware that the question asks for information from every government department. There has been real difficulty trying to determine which grants made to persons are grants to businesses. In the sense of the hon. member's question, he asks for grants to businesses. It is often difficult for departments to tell if a grant to an individual was a grant to that person's business or to the individual.

Given the complexity of the question and the numerous departments that have to be canvassed, the hon. member will have to exercise his usual patience and wait until the government gets the answer together.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

The Deputy Speaker: I should inform the House that earlier today the only notice of motion for the production of papers on the Order Paper was withdrawn.

(Motion withdrawn)

* * *

[*Translation*]

WAYS AND MEANS

EXCISE TAX ACT

Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.) moved that the ways and means motion to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Excise Act tabled in the House on April 25, 1995, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 212*)

YEAS

Members

- | | |
|---|---|
| Allmand | Arseneault |
| Assadourian | Bakopanos |
| Barnes | Bellemare |
| Bevilacqua | Blondin—Andrew |
| Bodnar | Bonin |
| Boudria | Brown (Oakville—Milton) |
| Brushett | Bryden |
| Bélanger | Calder |
| Campbell | Catterall |
| Cauchon | Chamberlain |
| Clancy | Collins |
| Comuzzi | Cowling |
| Crawford | Culbert |
| Discepola | Dromisky |
| Duhamel | Dupuy |
| Easter | Eggleton |
| English | Fewchuk |
| Finestone | Flis |
| Gagliano | Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine) |
| Gallaway | Gerrard |
| Godfrey | Goodale |
| Graham | Grose |
| Guarnieri | Harb |
| Harper (Churchill) | Hickey |
| Hopkins | Ianno |
| Iftody | Jackson |
| Jordan | Keyes |
| Kilger (Stormont—Dundas) | Knutson |
| Lastewka | Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul) |
| LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso) | Loney |
| MacLaren | MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys) |
| Malhi | Maloney |
| Marchi | Martin (LaSalle—Énard) |
| Massé | McCormick |
| McKinnon | McLellan (Edmonton Northwest) |
| McTeague | McWhinney |
| Mifflin | Milliken |
| Minna | Mitchell |
| Murray | Nault |
| O'Reilly | Pagtakhan |
| Paradis | Parrish |
| Patry | Peric |
| Peters | Peterson |
| Phinney | Pickard (Essex—Kent) |
| Pillitteri | Proud |
| Reed | Regan |
| Rideout | Ringuette—Maltais |
| Robichaud | Robillard |
| Rock | Rompkey |
| Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury) | Serré |
| Sheridan | Simmons |
| Skoke | St. Denis |
| Steckle | Stewart (Brant) |
| Stewart (Northumberland) | Szabo |
| Telegdi | Terrana |
| Torsney | Ur |
| Valeri | Vanclief |
| Verran | Volpe |
| Wappel | Whelan |
| Young —119 | |

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Althouse	Asselin
Bellehumeur	Bergeron
Bernier (Gaspé)	Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Bridgman	Brien
Brown (Calgary Southeast)	Bélisle
Canuel	Chatters
Daviault	Debien
de Savoye	Deshaies
Duceppe	Dumas
Duncan	Fillion
Frazer	Gauthier (Roberval)
Godin	Gouk
Grey (Beaver River)	Grubel
Guimond	Harper (Calgary West)
Harper (Simcoe Centre)	Hayes
Hermanson	Hill (Macleod)
Hill (Prince George—Peace River)	Hoepfner
Jacob	Johnston
Lalonde	Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)	Lefebvre
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)	Leroux (Shefford)
Loubier	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Mayfield	Meredith
Ménard	Nunez
Paré	Picard (Drummond)
Pomerleau	Ramsay
Ringma	Rocheleau
Silye	Solberg
Stinson	Taylor
Thompson	Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Tremblay (Rosemont)	Williams—64

PAIRED MEMBERS

Bachand	Baker
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)	Bouchard
Caccia	Caron
Chan	Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen	Collenette
Copps	Crête
Dalphond—Guiral	DeVillers
Dubé	Finlay
Gaffney	Gagnon (Québec)
Guay	Harvard
Hubbard	Kraft Sloan
Langlois	Laurin
Lebel	Leblanc (Longueuil)
Lincoln	MacAulay
MacDonald	Marchand
O'Brien	Plamondon
Sauvageau	Speller
St-Laurent	Tobin

(1525)

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

Mr. White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, sorry, I was unavoidably detained when the question was put talking about the government's lack of integrity with the press.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

The House resumed from May 9, 1995, consideration of the motion that Bill C-85, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act and to provide for the continuation of a certain provision, be read the second time and referred to a committee and on the motion that the question be now put.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I understand that probably the standing orders were not broken by the fact that we held a vote without a 30-minute bell. However, I am concerned that a precedent is being set that is not wise. There was not all party agreement that we suspend the normal 30-minute bell. It does make it difficult to keep members here and to allow them to exercise their franchise in the proper manner.

I urge that the House be a little more considerate about rushing the vote on some of these matters.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member, who is a very experienced member now, knows the rules of the House.

The timing of the bells for any vote is governed by mutual agreement of the two whips who take the vote at the time, namely the chief government whip and the chief opposition whip. That is clearly in our standing orders. I am sure all hon. members, particularly someone who holds the position of House leader, know that.

The Deputy Speaker: Points were made on both sides. All members know what the rules provide, as was indicated by the government whip. If we are to have an atmosphere of better cordiality in this Parliament than in the last Parliament, I would hope that in the future the whips of the government and the official opposition would indicate to the House leader of the Reform Party that there will not be a bell held after the vote. I would hope that all members would respect one another on that issue.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, with respect, the courtesy call was extended to the members yesterday. What the Speaker has indicated as advice was followed, even though there was no requirement in the rules of the House. That courtesy was extended because we are a very courteous government.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, there were some discussions yesterday. There was some indication that there may or may not be a 30-minute bell, a 15-minute bell, or an immediate walk-down. Some of us were left to believe that there might be a period of waiting, perhaps 15 minutes, before we would come in and vote. That was not clearly communicated to my caucus. That

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is why I am concerned about a precedent being set. It does not provide an atmosphere where we can work co-operatively together.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Wild Rose has two minutes left in his intervention.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will spend the last two minutes repeating some of the things I said yesterday.

The main reason I will be voting against this bill is because I want to represent the people in my riding. It is difficult for people across the way to understand that, but the people in my riding say there should be no more gold plated pensions. They would like to see a pension but they would like it to be the same as what they have to accept in the private sector. That is completely fair.

(1530)

Although I cannot represent other people I have spoken in about 37 ridings, most of which are Liberal ridings. I would like to express on behalf of the people in those ridings that they too would like to see their members opt out of these types of pension plans. However they know that it will not happen. There happens to be a little problem. Possibly it is greed.

I want to make sure the government will hear the people when they ask for a plan to be provided that is compatible with the private sector. The government should consider establishing a separate group, a third party of the citizenry. Let the employers decide what they should pay in the way of pensions, salaries, and a few other things.

The Reform Party is prepared to do that. If Bloc members and the Liberals would like to come aboard, we could select people from the private sector and meet together to determine what we should receive in the way of pay, pensions and so on. We would certainly go along with the idea and I would accept whatever they decide.

As a reminder to the Liberals, especially to my friend from Kingston who seems to have forgotten, he works for the people of Kingston. They do not work for him. Let them set the salary and the pension. That is the fair way of doing it.

As leaders let us set the example. Everyone in the country is required to tighten their belts, to do more with less. For heaven's sake, the least we can do is set the example by refusing the pension. We could set examples in a lot of other ways as well. We could cut totally unnecessary trips to Asia, Africa, Europe and all over the world. It would result in a saving of \$1.8 million, which would help meet the needs of many people in the country who are suffering for one reason or another.

There are many things to consider. Take a look at my frame. It crawls into an economy seat every time I get on a plane. If you

think that is fun, trade sizes for a day and I will let you try it. It is a sacrifice to do it and I do not mind. I will continue to do it.

All of us need to sit back and realize that we are asking Canadians to help us solve the problem created by the politicians of the past in terms of the country's debt and deficits. Let us get our act together, think of our future, think of the children we are raising and think of our grandchildren. Let us act like statesmen and forget the politics and the silliness.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to be able to speak to Bill C-85, an act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act and to provide for the continuation of a certain provision. Bill C-85, which will amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, has been touted by the Prime Minister as a great pension reform package that members of Parliament deserve because they are so underpaid.

If anything raises the ire of Canadians, it is the scandalously generous pension provisions given to members of Parliament. Even more disturbing is the attempt to conceal from the public just how rich the pension plan remains even after the proposed changes.

The government reports in the public accounts, part II, how much MPs spend on office expenditures, travel and their salaries. It is very interesting to note they refuse to tell the public how much the members of Parliament pension scheme costs.

A former Liberal member introduced a private member's bill which would allow the auditor general to report more frequently so that waste and mistakes would be more readily exposed. This process would open the operations of government to closer scrutiny by Parliament on behalf of the people. What happened? The government said: "No way. We do not want closer scrutiny. We do not want the public to know what is really happening with their money". Then it gave the hon. member a pat on the back and sent him to the other place.

Regrettably, the cost of the members of Parliament pension is not readily available to anyone.

(1535)

Even though this new law will reduce the accrual rate for benefits by 1 per cent, that is from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, it still remains double the rate found in registered plans in the private sector. There will be provisions for full inflation compensation whereas 78.3 per cent of private sector pensions have no automatic adjustment for inflation.

Furthermore, the members of Parliament pension account earns a generous 10 per cent interest so the costs attributed to the plan are effectively lowered. Yet MPs who choose to accept the one-time offer to opt out of the plan will be paid only 4 per cent on their contributions.

It is there but little is said about the higher rate of pensions for MPs leaving office with more than six years service. Even if this

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group were to opt out of the plan, they will be paid their pension for the period prior to October 1993 under the conditions of the old pension plan.

Further bringing the new plan into question, MPs elected in the next Parliament will be required to participate in the pension plan. There will be no future open ended choice to say no to the gravy train. Why is the option to choose not to participate in the plan closed off at this time?

Fifty-two Reform members of Parliament have forced this issue of pension reform, but the government's presented reforms are really an insult to Canadians. Until the government changes the retirement compensation account, the account the government and previous governments have used to pay benefits greater than those allowed under a registered pension plan provided for by the Income Tax Act, Reformers and some other principal members of Parliament refuse to be part of the charade and deception. We are not willing to ask Canadians to pay for this pension windfall.

Right now, after only 10 years, members of Parliament can receive a pension worth half their salary. Anyone else would have to work and contribute to their pension plan for at least 25 years to achieve this and for most, without inflation protection.

Also under the new plan taxpayers still pay \$3.60 for every \$1 the member of Parliament pays into his or her retirement pension. As a comparison, federal public servants are matched dollar for dollar, a ratio often seen in the private sector as well.

The report by Sobeco, Ernst and Young suggested that pension benefits be limited to retirees who are at least 60 years of age, but the Prime Minister said members of Parliament have earned this pension even after only six years. Granted, for members who came into this House after October 1993, the new law would set eligibility at a minimum age of 55 for benefits accrued after this bill becomes law. Five more years to age 60 was too long to wait. The outside packaging looks okay, but if we open it up the box is empty.

Reformers do not need to hire consultants to tell them that the members of Parliament pension should be reined in, just listen to the ordinary working people of all ages and income ranges. They have told government what they think, yet the government seems unwilling to listen to Canadian citizens. It studied the issue and studied the issue, all the while taunting us with a carrot, promising real change.

We know the amendments are a done deal. The Liberals have the numbers in government to do what they want, but the one thing they can be sure of is that this issue will not go away. It will still be an election issue next time around so they will still have to answer to the voters.

A number of hon. government members have pointed their fingers this way and made allegations that some Reform members are double dipping. We on this side of the House have made it clear that we object to double dipping. We recognize that Bill C-85 attempts to remove double dipping practices and we commend the government for its move in this aspect.

Former members of Parliament who were given political appointments to work at another federal job should not draw pay for that job while continuing to draw their MP pensions. Private sector workers must earn their pensions by working 25 or more years before they are able to collect benefits. Again I point out some members of Parliament need only have served six years to collect these generous packages.

Individuals in the private sector who have earned and are collecting pensions can and do take other employment while continuing to collect their pensions. After all, they have had to win the job they occupy; it is not given to them as a patronage payoff. In this aspect, I had to win this job by convincing the voters of my constituency that I was their best choice to represent them here in Parliament.

(1540)

Liberals are quick to point out that some Reform members, myself included, collect military pensions while at the same time earning salaries as members of Parliament. I collect an annuity for more than 36 years service in the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Canadian Armed Forces. I paid into that superannuation account with matching government contributions for 35 of those 36 years. Benefits accrued at 2 per cent per year, which is the normal rate for pension plans in the private sector.

The annuity I draw comes from a superannuation fund paid into by former and present members of the RCAF and Canadian Armed Forces over many years. That fund currently stands at just under \$30 billion so the notion that my annuity is a gift out of the taxpayer's pocket is simply untrue. My annuity has been fully paid for and hon. members should be aware of that. Some of my colleagues also earn pensions and for many years made contributions to their pension plans.

What some government members are trying to do is compare apples and oranges. These pensions are a far cry from the generous pensions doled out to former members of Parliament who receive appointments to serve on various government boards or commissions.

Canada is among the world's most generous countries when it comes to members of Parliament pensions. There is no other country in the world which pays parliamentarians a pension after serving only six years in office, with no minimum age to retire.

In December 1993 the leader of the Reform Party wrote to the Prime Minister saying:

Government Orders

Reform MPs sincerely believe that the credibility of Parliament in dealing with the financial crisis facing the federal government will be increased if every parliamentary caucus reviews the MPs' pension, pay and perks package and agrees to significant reductions.

By doing so, the 35th Parliament can increase its moral authority to appeal to other Canadians to make the sacrifices necessary to permit a balancing of the federal budget.

In Bill C-85 government has fallen sorely short of achieving appropriate and necessary member of Parliament pension reforms. Surely it should reconsider.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I remind Canadians watching the debate today that we are discussing the acceptability of the proposed pension for members of Parliament. As they are probably aware, the Liberal government introduced some changes to the former pension system. The changes have been set out in great detail in a number of speeches today and I am not proposing to repeat them.

The issue is very simple. Is the proposed plan fair and reasonable? Is what is being proposed as a pension for members of Parliament fair and reasonable? The answer is very clear. No, it is not fair and reasonable. There are a number of reasons for this.

My colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands and a number of other colleagues have set out the reasons yet again. It is very clear that what is proposed is not fair and reasonable. There are three areas in which the plan is not fair and reasonable.

It is incredibly rich. It allows a level of pension that is illegal for any other Canadian. If any other institution or organization proposed to give its employees this kind of a pension it would be prosecuted. It is flatly illegal. Somehow the richness for members of Parliament is okay. The lawmakers can have different rules. It simply flies in the face of what is right and what is just.

It is an inequitable system. No other Canadians in the country could ever expect to have this kind of a pension plan, yet to a very large degree those self same Canadians will have to pay for the pension plan that is being proposed.

A constituent phoned my office yesterday and said that he had worked for a major oil company for 30 years. He said his pension was not any better alongside an MP who has worked only six years. He wondered how that could be, and he had to pay for it.

It is clearly inequitable for lawmakers to have a pension and benefits that are unavailable to any other Canadian. These benefits are fully indexed. There are virtually no other pension plans available anywhere in the country that are tied to the level of inflation. Yet lawmakers feel they are entitled to that. This is not a fair and reasonable plan.

(1545)

The sad thing about this is that the people who have to pay the shot for this plan have no say in how the plan is structured. In any other plan, most or at least half of the benefits are paid for by the person receiving them. In this particular plan the people receiving the benefits pay one-fifth or one-sixth of the benefits they will eventually receive. The people who have to pay the lion's share in this plan have no voice in the negotiations whatsoever, except what we might choose to give them.

My friends in the Bloc would say it is very bad labour relations when one party simply sets down the benefits they expect to take and the other side has to pay them. That is clearly inequitable and unreasonable.

In spite of the fact that this plan is not fair and reasonable, the Liberals go through a song and dance saying that yes it is. We should examine those arguments because as Canadians we need to judge whether or not this is a good and fair piece of legislation. Reformers are saying loudly that it is not. I have given some of the reasons and my colleagues have given more.

Let us see what the Liberals are saying. The first thing they say is: "At least we did something". For those who might be watching these debates and who are students of political science, they might see this as a very interesting and excellent example of spin doctoring, of how a clearly untenable and indefensible proposal by a government is put forward as being equitable and defensible.

First the Liberals say: "At least we did something. We made some cutbacks. We made some changes. We brought in reform". I might add this was thanks to Reform members who have kept raising this issue over and over in the House. I dare say the Liberals would have been quite happy to forget it if we had not pushed them to the mat and said: "You must do something about this MP pension plan. Canadians simply will not stand for it to be left as it is".

The second thing they say is: "We never promised to do anything more than this. We have done everything we said we would do". I suggest the real issue is whether it was the right thing to do. Is that not what we are here for, to do the right thing? Or are we here to do the least thing possible so we can say we did something? I think Canadians should judge.

Then there was a very interesting argument brought up by the President of the Treasury Board. He said that they were doing this because they care about their families and the people who are saying this is not a good plan should really think about whether they really care about their families. All Canadians care very much about their families, particularly the Canadians who are going to have to pay the shot for this pension plan that will benefit the families of a very few. It is the families of Canadians

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and Canadians themselves and fairness for all that we should thinking about, not just ourselves and our families.

I find it rather remarkable that somehow a plan that is unfair, greedy and beyond what any other Canadian family could ever hope for is excused and justified on the basis that we care about our families. I do not think so.

Then the argument is brought up that almost half of the MPs do not qualify for a pension anyway. So? We are talking about the people who do qualify for a pension. Is the pension for those who do qualify fair and reasonable? The answer is no.

Then the President of the Treasury Board brought up studies that propose MPs should earn more. The President of the Treasury Board said that we do not dare do that; we do not dare follow the recommendations of those studies. What he actually said was interesting if one follows political speak.

(1550)

He said that it is not functionally possible at this time. Then he suggests it is okay to stay unreasonable on the pension side because we cannot do anything about the other recommendations. I do not think that two wrongs make a right in the minds of Canadians. Reform is against increasing either the salary or letting the pension stay unreasonable, particularly in light of the fact that the country is not living within its means.

The next argument is interesting, which is the great sacrifice MPs make to serve the public good. Being an MP I can say there is some sacrifice involved, although I do not notice any shortage of people willing and able to make that sacrifice. There are literally millions of Canadians who make sacrifices to serve the public good.

This week in the House we rose in a standing ovation to acknowledge and show appreciation for the Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice. They went overseas and had the roar of guns in their ears. They suffered the separation from their loved ones, fear for their lives, danger and injury for an unlimited period of time. They made a sacrifice.

What about the people in the private sector who go all over the world to pursue trade opportunities on behalf of their companies, suffering from jet lag and all of the deprivations of travel? What about the millions of Canadians who sacrifice in both their personal and professional lives to give care and guidance to their children?

Sacrifice is a part of life. For MPs in the House to say we are making a sacrifice and therefore we should be given special consideration is ludicrous. It will not wash with Canadians.

It might be interesting for members of the House to know about a survey I have been doing in my riding. I asked whether they supported MPs receiving the benefits outlined in the

information I gave them. Eighty-seven per cent answered no. Question: Do you agree with your MP's decision to opt out of the MP pension plan and provide for her own retirement through a personal RRSP governed by the same guidelines as all other Canadians? Answer yes: 88.7 per cent. Question: Do you think MP pension benefits should be reduced retroactively to reflect Canada's current fiscal situation? Answer yes: 87 per cent.

It is very clear that Canadians are fed up with politicians who say one thing and do another, who decry any suggestion of a two tier health care system. They bleed from every pore at the mere suggestion, but a two tier pension system that benefits them is just fine.

It is time we showed some leadership in the House and put our money where our mouth is. Reformers are prepared to do that. I challenge government members to show that we want to do what is right and fair for the country and we want to be on an equal playing field with the citizens of this country. We are prepared to do that in the matter of the pension plan.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague who just spoke. That was well said. I hope hon. members on the other side were listening.

Mr. Hermanson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a serious matter. We do not have a quorum and that concerns me.

The Deputy Speaker: There does not appear to be a quorum. Call in the members.

(1555)

And the bells having rung:

The Deputy Speaker: There is now a quorum. Resuming debate.

Mr. Stinson: Mr. Speaker, when Europeans first came to Canada everyone had such a short life expectancy and society as a whole was so poor that people basically worked hard from childhood until they died. Some third world nations are still like that, but the industrialized world has made enough advances in public health and medicine that diseases which used to claim huge numbers of people have been either controlled or eliminated in developed countries.

We generally expect to live long and healthy lives. For example, as of 1992 the Canadian life expectancy for women was 81.2 years while some say that we overworked men nevertheless manage to survive for an expected span of 74.9 years.

In addition to improved health, there are other major achievements of developed countries. We generate sufficient wealth so that both our children and our seniors no longer need to be involved in the direct production of wealth. We provide free public education for our young people at least to the age of 16.

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We pride ourselves on the fact that child labour is a thing of the past in our modern industrialized world.

At the other end of life, industrialized nations also provide a special time when the wealth of society allows the elderly to be free from the need to produce more wealth. For Canadians age 65 and older, advances in medicine and improved nutrition have also made it possible for them to enjoy improved health and independence.

I had the opportunity last week to drop in at the beautiful lakeside community of Sorrento in my riding of Okanagan—Shuswap. The 220 members of their old age pensioners branch had raised enough money with no government grants of any kind to build a 30 by 60 foot addition to their original meeting place so that they could have room to enjoy such things as carpet bowling, snooker and darts. They also did the majority of the physical work themselves, erecting the walls and rafters.

Some of these seniors I am speaking of are in their 80s. I was impressed not only with their energy but the enthusiasm they showed and the sincere concern they had for Canada. The seniors told me they are also concerned about whether Canada can continue to provide pensions on which they all depend because of excessive government spending, such as the gold plated MP pension plans.

Of course some of these seniors have been thrifty and fortunate enough to own their own homes which keeps their monthly expenses down. Some seniors receive cheques from company pension plans or interest payments from their life savings, but many live on nationally funded pensions.

Low income seniors, especially elderly widows, tell me they have great worries about adequate housing, health care, home care after hospitalization, and public transportation. Nevertheless overall this is a generation of people who lived through the great depression. They know how to make do as they say, meaning that they can get by on very little without complaining.

For example, the monthly maximum payment this quarter for single seniors receiving old age security and the government's income supplement is \$850 a month. For married seniors both of whom are over age 65, the monthly maximum payment this quarter from the federal pension and income supplement combined is \$689 a month each. In other words, senior couples are living on less than \$1,400 per month or \$16,542 per year from which they must also pay taxes.

Nationally, StatsCan set the low income cut off at a point where more than 54.7 per cent of income is required to pay for food, shelter and clothing. In rural areas, for 1993 the low income cut off for families of two was \$14,238. For small towns, the level was \$16,329. Therefore it is only in rural parts of

Canada that seniors living on OAS and GIS escape poverty. The majority of Canadians live in cities. The low income cut off for a family of two shoots up to \$20,603 in cities like Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Remember, married seniors get \$4,000 less than that.

(1600)

I want to contrast the pensions of those average Canadian seniors with members of Parliament, who have been in the remarkable position of being able to pass the very law that determines how much pension they will receive. How would reasonable MPs decide on their pensions? Would they look at what is done in other countries? For example, in the United Kingdom parliamentarians contribute 6 per cent of their salaries and are eligible for pension after 55 when age plus years of service equal 80. The United States congressmen contribute 1.3 per cent and can qualify at age 50 with 20 years service. Obviously Canadian MPs ignored those standards, both for the present pensions and their so-called reforms.

Bill C-85 at long last proposes to reform MPs' pensions so that they cannot qualify until age 55. It also ends double dipping. For both these improvements I congratulate the government. However, these were merely two small baby steps toward badly needed major strides that should have been performed in reforming MPs' pensions in this country.

Our goal should be nothing other than a pension plan similar to those allowed to everyday Canadian seniors. For them the Income Tax Act continues to set a 6 per cent limit on pension contributions. However, under Bill C-85 MPs' pension contributions will only drop from the present 11 per cent to 9 per cent. It is still 50 per cent higher than allowed for the private sector and it is still costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

Another point I wish to raise concerns the opting out possibility. The entire pension plan should be significantly reformed so that no MP in good conscience would see any need to opt out. Without those complete down to earth reforms to the MPs' pension plan, every newly elected member of Parliament must have the option to turn down the pension plan, which through Bill C-85 has merely gone from being solid gold to being gold-plated. In my opinion, even after passage of Bill C-85 MPs' pensions will remain a national disgrace.

When the Liberals were elected the Canadian people accepted them as they would at a wedding. They looked at them as either the bride or the groom. They gave them the ring to run this country. Unfortunately, since then, through acts such as this piddling around with the MPs' pension plan, I am afraid the Liberal government has given the Canadian public the finger.

We do not have to delve too deeply to see what it is costing the Canadian public today to keep what these MPs seem to say is

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their right. Does any member of Parliament think that the only reason he came to this place was in order to get a pension and his only way of being paid back is through that pension? I would like to know what their commitment to Canada is. I find it hard to accept that there is anyone in this House who would use that.

I hear nothing from the other side with regard to this debate. I have yet to hear anyone on the other side stand up to address this. I find this strange. Are they afraid the Canadian public would not listen to what they say, or if it did listen it would want to turf them out? I think it is probably the latter. Hopefully I am wrong. I would sincerely like to see a member from the other side rise and speak to this issue. The Canadian public would also like to hear them speak to this issue. We have had only smoke and mirrors from the other side with respect to this. Perhaps it is time they clear the smoke away and tell us exactly what they have done to reform the MPs' pension plan and what the cost will now be to the Canadian taxpayers, who perceive the MPs as living off them like parasites.

It is sad to say that in this country we have fallen that badly. The obligation should be for someone from the government side to stand up and support their own pension scheme. If they would go out and talk to seniors and see how much they have contributed to the country, with no guarantees, they would be really surprised. Maybe we should be a little ashamed of what we have allowed to happen in this country.

(1605)

Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to put some perspective on the controversy. I will end with a demand for greater openness in the process of setting the compensation for members of Parliament.

In economics, one of the most difficult problems we have is to explain the relative wages of people in different occupations. Why does a dishwasher earn typically only the minimum wage? Why do miners earn considerably more than that? What should be the right pay for teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, and MPs? Who knows?

In economics we have some answers. One side explains that generally compensation for workers is higher where greater skill and training are required. People who go to occupations that require only high school graduation will typically get a lower level of pay than those who had to graduate from university. Certainly those in graduate and medical school occupations make more than those with lower educations. I think this is a widely accepted principle. There is no problem with fairness. That is generally accepted in society.

Also accepted in society, and the data show that this can be verified, is that the riskier a job, risks like illness and accident, the higher should be the pay. The greater the discomfort, if you have to work in the middle of the night or in a dirty environment, then pay tends to be higher than when it is in a pleasant environment.

Generally these elements are verified by empirical studies. Yet even at a time when there was no government to appeal to there were differences in wages, which could not be explained by these factors alone. Economists know a structure of wages of different—

The Deputy Speaker: Point of order, the hon. member for Elk Island.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, the member for Capilano—Howe Sound has very important things to say and I think there should be more than two Liberals present to hear it. I call quorum.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have a quorum.

The interval does not come off the member's time.

Mr. Grubel: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to put some perspective on the debate about pensions by suggesting that what has happened in Canada and many other democracies is we do not have a transparent system.

In free markets, when there is no government to step in constantly and listen to people about their unhappiness about their wages, there is a very important equilibrium achieved in markets. Individuals under their own free will can walk up to someone and say they would like to work as a cook, as a miner, or whatever it is, and he or she gets employed. They are obviously better off than with anything else they would have done. They are happy. They have had a decision. They have maximized their welfare.

(1610)

One can imagine that in a world like that, without any government, we can develop a situation where there are just the number of cooks who want to work at the wage that is being offered them to be cooks. There are just the number of nurses. There will be neither people who are looking for jobs nor will there be shortages. The wages that come out of such a competitive system may be interpreted as being efficient and in some sense representing the best distribution of wages our society can arrive at.

We all know that especially in the post-war years governments have taken it upon themselves to correct the outcome of the market. We have opened our ears as members of Parliament

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to people who do not like the structure that has come from a free market where people under complete freedom, talking to each other and making contracts without coercion, have produced this outcome.

We hear stories that are so appealing they always bring tears to my eyes. I hear farmers telling me: "My income was only so much. My wage was only so much. Do you know how important my job is? If it was not for us farmers there would not be any food and we would all die. Therefore, I think I should earn more". I do not have to elaborate on what the nurses and doctors say and what the teachers say would happen to the next generation if they were not there.

All of this sounds very good. The people who say this all the time have themselves completely convinced that the wages a free society and free exchange have produced are not right. They need more and more. This has created the kind of division in society we have today, inefficiencies and problems. The wages are set so high that there are long waiting lists of people who wish to join that occupation and others where the wages are too low and they cannot find workers for it. It is a sad thing. I believe that decentralized decision making was much better. However, we are now in an ideology that says the government has a right to step in.

I want to now turn to a special problem that is associated with setting the wages of people like members of Parliament, where a government has to be involved. Here the problem is that until now there has never been a shortage of people who want to apply for the job. I do not know what the right wage is. I challenge anyone. The big problem is that the wage that is set will determine on average what quality of skills, intelligence, and energy you get of people who apply for the job and ultimately will end up in the Chamber.

I think almost everybody would agree if today the wages for MPs were \$20,000. What we would get on the one hand would be people who could not make more than \$20,000 in the private market. On the other hand, we would get very rich people to whom this would be a hobby. It would be a totally undesirable mix of people here in Parliament. However, who is to say what is the right wage? We cannot ask members of Parliament any more than we can ask farmers, nurses, doctors or teachers. They will all say they have the most important job in society and it should be very, very high. Of course it cannot be done like that.

What is the next best solution? Historically, we always have to come up with some wage. What is the right wage? The Government of Canada and all democratic governments have taken recourse to appointing commissions. The other day another commission report was released on that subject. I looked back. There must have been commissions in the history of the Parliament of Canada at least every four or five years since the

founding of Parliament. They have all said that the wages should be higher than they are.

(1615)

To the best of my memory they said the wage should be set around \$100,000 or \$120,000 a year. I am not endorsing this. I do not know what the right answer is.

One of the big problems comes once these wages are announced by these wise people. They are typically appointed with the consent of a broad spectrum of people. Canadians believe these wages are high relative to the norm.

I have recently been having a lot of fun asking people I meet at dinner parties or at political conventions what the average income is of a Canadian working in manufacturing. Very few know it is \$32,000. I ask what income does one have to earn to belong to the top 10 per cent of income earners in Canada. It is \$52,000. The kind of people one meets when one is a member of Parliament typically say it is somewhere around \$80,000 or \$100,000. Some young students who come to lobby me tell me it is \$1 million. It is \$52,000 or \$53,000.

It is quite clear the kind of problem we are facing as a Parliament in our system. People who have the best in mind for Canada say that if we want quality people in Parliament, we should set a wage that right now would probably be putting them in the top 1 or 2 per cent of the income distribution. Yet the majority of Canadians have lower wages.

It was not malice on the part of past Parliaments that took a way out of this which is now beginning to haunt us. They have set wages which are within the realm of acceptability in public opinion. Then they have begun to hide compensation in order to achieve a level of compensation that is consistent with what these wise people have said it should be. That is why my whip said the other day that if we look at the hidden compensation we would reach a level that is a little below what these commissions have recommended recently.

As is typical with all these procedures without checks, once members of Parliament in recent years found out they could get away with hiding compensation, they went overboard. They went overboard in the form of pensions. It was clearly a mistake on their part to have gone as far as they have by overshooting the amount of compensation hidden in the pension.

What I conclude from this analysis of our current problems is that the issue faced by Parliament today is not the narrow focus on the pension; it is what my colleague the whip has said. We need a more rational structure, a transparent structure of the compensation for members of Parliament.

We should also be open with the people of Canada. In today's age of high levels of education, of communication, of understanding, I am personally convinced and have enough confidence in the democratic system that people would accept the judgment of those wise people and say: "Yes, we want that quality of people to run for Parliament. We do not want it to be

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reserved for only the rich or people who don't have anything else to do. We want to attract good people". They would probably go for a compensation that is very close to what we have now, but a much lower pension. That would be consistent with what the last commission said.

In my judgment we need a more transparent, open system that would put all of the cards on the table. We would end up with this being accepted by the people of Canada.

(1620)

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the pension plan was introduced in 1952 by an act called the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act. It was amended in 1992 to coincide with the Income Tax Act.

During the course of this debate the conditions of the pension have been illustrated several times, so I do not wish to go into that, other than to look back to pre-election 1993 when there was considerable concern among Canadians as to how the pension plan had developed since 1952. There was enough concern, obviously, that in 1991 an amendment was passed to bring it in line with the Income Tax Act. Here we are in 1995 again looking at a possible adjustment to the pension plan.

Some of the things which were of great concern to the Reform Party prior to the election were members of Parliament having to serve only six years to be eligible to draw the pension, regardless of their age. Another condition which was of great concern to us was the indexing. I think at age 60 it was indexed according to the cost of living. A third concern was the fact that the pension was based on the best six years of salary. It did not say whether they were consecutive years to my knowledge.

The people of Canada had concerns about the provisions in the plan. They were not happy with it because it did not coincide with the private sector. It tended to suggest very strongly that there was a two tier system for pensions in the country, one for MPs and one for everyone else.

I assume some pressure was brought to bear through 1992 and some adjustments were made, such as passing the amendment which would put the plan in line with the Income Tax Act.

Now we are considering Bill C-85. I actually do not understand what the bill will do to address the general concerns which were expressed about the pension plan prior to the 1993 election.

When I read through it I notice that the eligibility age has been increased to 55. That rules out the concern of getting a pension after six years of service. The person would still have to wait until they were 55 years old.

The plan was brought in originally in 1952. In those years I can remember that my parents, for example, were looking toward their retirement. The eligibility age was 65. The trend at that time from a health and a technological point of view was that men, because they formed the major part of the workforce in those days, would retire at 65 and be dead of a heart attack or some such thing before they reached 65 and a half.

I suggest strongly that over the years we have made advances in health, not only in the curing of various conditions but also in prevention. We lead a much more healthy lifestyle, so 55 is not really rational for 1993. If we were debating this in 1952 when the plan was originally implemented it might have some validity.

That is one thing which Bill C-85 does in addressing the inequities of the existing plan. As far as I can see it really does not do much of anything else. It talks about opting out or opting in, however the phrase is worded. That is a one-shot deal. It applies to members of Parliament now. It includes those who have six years' service. Once that happens every MP who comes along after this will have to participate in the plan. The amendment does not really address much other than an increase on when one can draw the pension. To my mind that is not enough.

(1625)

The whole pension issue and this bill, when one looks at it in its entirety, is an excellent illustration at how out of touch government politicians are with the Canadian public. There was a hue and cry about pensions prior to the election. The majority of Canadians realize that even with these changes in the pension plan, it will far exceed those available anywhere else in Canada.

The other component in this plan that has to be looked at very seriously is the retirement compensation account and the mechanisms used in paying out the benefits.

Regarding the opting out situation, there will be no choice. It is a one-shot deal. It is going to put a number of Reformers, who will come into this Parliament in the next election in great numbers, in the position of having to participate in the plan. It will be against their principles.

One of the things that illustrates the point I am talking about now is an article that was in the Vancouver *Sun* on February 9, 1995 by Barbara Yaffe. That article was entitled "Pension tiff is a measure of MP-voter rift".

In her article she pointed out that one of the problems with the pension issue is that MPs are the ones that determine the

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pensions. Many of my colleagues have made reference to the same point. One wonders how many other jobs there are where people can determine their own pension benefits.

We have two options basically. We either have a pension plan or we do not. If we choose to have a pension plan, the Reform position is to bring it in line with that of the private sector, including such things as retirement age, indexing, et cetera. It should allow MPs the choice of whether or not to participate and seriously consider the benefits of allowing for some independent body of Canadian taxpayers to decide on the plan's perks, mechanisms, et cetera.

The pension plan as it stands is not acceptable to the majority of Canadians. The changes proposed by Bill C-85 are tokenism or lip service. I am quite confident that the Canadian public will come to this conclusion as well.

All of us must constantly keep in mind that the Canadian people are the ones who pay the bills. We work for them. It is probably why we are called public servants. That seems to be something that some of us tend to forget quite easily once we come to Ottawa.

Once again I refer to the article by Barbara Yaffe. She writes that this unsavoury struggle over politician pensions has revealed one thing quite clearly. "How utterly out of touch some MPs are with the real people in their ridings".

One must wonder why only Reformers seem to be speaking on this bill. Does this issue not concern the constituents of any other members of the government?

The people of North Surrey have been very clear on this issue. I cannot accept this pension plan as it presently stands, nor can I accept the proposed changes in the bill. My constituents have also said to me very strongly that we must get these opinions out here on the floor of the House because the government is not listening to them.

(1630)

Therefore I want to tell all members of the House and my constituents in Surrey North that I will not be participating in the pension plan. I am joining my colleagues in opting out until something comes along that is much more equitable with the rest of the country and my fellow Canadians.

Mr. Silye: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek unanimous consent to address the bill again. I have spoken to it once, but in light of the fact that I have sparked some interesting reaction I was wondering if members of the House would be willing to allow me to speak to the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the member speak again?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate on the issue of MPs pensions. It is certainly one issue that raises the blood pressure of the majority of Canadians and one time slot on the parliamentary channel that receives attention.

I dare say there is not a single MP who has not been dogged by constituents on the issue. The obscenity of the bloated pension scheme for MPs raised the hackles of the majority of Canadians. If I were not to opt out of the plan my face would be as red as the Liberal red ink book. It is the ultimate in Liberal spin doctoring to call it pension reform. I do not know how MPs could face their constituents.

I remember during the campaign being told by the incumbent when I complained about the MP pension scheme that once I got here I would certainly change my mind. I have not changed my mind.

I challenge any government member to look in the face of a struggling overtaxed and overextended constituent and defend the ultra-luxurious pension plan. I further challenge government members to defend Bill C-85 and the so-called amendments contained in the legislation.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell can obfuscate, twist and distort the Reform position on MP remuneration. I challenge him to tell a dairy farmer in Cumberland why he deserves the gold plated pension. I bet he hopes no one is watching the theatre of the absurd practised by the member on the issue of pensions.

We are witnessing a serious double standard characterized by greed and complete disrespect for the taxpayer's dollar. On the one hand the government preaches deficit reduction and debt control. On the other hand it introduces Bill C-85 under the guise of reforming the obscene pension plan. In other words, do what I say and not what I do. This is not the kind of leadership Canada needs at this time. It shows a lack of leadership.

The Reform Party supports a pension plan that brings MPs pensions into line with private sector pensions. In my view if the Liberal government vacillates on the issue it will vacillate on every issue. There is a major principle involved and the government has fumbled the ball. Where is its conscience? What does Bill C-85 give us and the taxpayers?

The bill lowers the rate at which benefits accrue. At 4 per cent they are still double the rate allowed for registered plans under the Income Tax Act. The so-called reforms include provisions for virtually full compensation for inflation which certainly does not parallel private sector pension plans. Over 78 per cent of private sector plans have no automatic adjustment for inflation.

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The bill's minimum age provision of 55 does not go far enough. Under the Income Tax Act pension benefits must be reduced by at least 3 per cent per year if collected prior to attaining the age of 60 or alternately has 30 years of eligibility or attaining age and years of service totalling 80 years. This avoids that provision of the Income Tax Act.

(1635)

The legislation before us today will still use the special arrangement called an RCA account to pay members' benefits that are twice as generous as private sector norms. Until this is addressed, the whole bill is just window dressing. I want to see the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell sell this to a hard working farmer in his riding who has to save and administer a plan of his own. I have hard working loggers, miners, mill workers, fishermen and business people in my riding. I would not envy trying to sell it to them.

We estimate that long run costs for the new pension plan will be close to 50 per cent of the payroll costs for currently sitting members. A plan the Reform Party could have supported would have had a maximum cost to taxpayers of 9 per cent of payroll.

Again the government is bleeding the taxpayer dry and at the same time selling snake oil to cure the illness. It is deceitful and unfair, especially given that it will not allow opting out for members elected in the next election. The pension scheme will be an issue in three years. We guarantee it.

Many Reform MPs ran their election campaigns promising to come to this *Alice in Wonderland* place and reform MPs' pensions. It was a solemn commitment to weary Canadians bled dry by greedy governments. The government's response has been to raise MPs' take home salary by reducing the MPs' contribution rate to the pension plan.

Mr. Stinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure what the hon. member has to say is extremely important, but I do not see a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: The member is quite correct. There is not a quorum. Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have a quorum. Debate shall continue with the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Speaker, this will serve to keep the ratio of government to member contribution very high.

The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell talked yesterday of openness, honesty and sincerity. There is not a scintilla of veracity in what the government is telling Canadians about the

pension plan. When we add this insult to the \$550 billion debt, we are truly a country in trouble.

The government is touting Bill C-85 as pension reform but it is not telling the complete story. Does the member for Hamilton East call a new pension of \$2.7 million from the old \$3.3 million windfall a reform? It is obscene and warrants the scrutiny of fair minded Canadians. It is truly unresponsive and says to every Canadian: "You sacrifice, not me".

(1640)

I will be opting out and joining the majority of Canadians who are not taking advantage of the system and who are looking for leadership on issues like this one that we are not receiving from the government.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the bill which is about more than the pensions that some members of Parliament will collect, much more. The bill reflects a difference in beliefs about the role of a parliamentarian and about the relationship between government and those who are governed.

It might seem like a bit of an exaggeration to say that a bill dealing with pension reform reflects ideals about the very nature of governance in a democratic society. I do not think it is an exaggeration at all. Furthermore, with the benefit of time, the people of Canada will agree with me that the position taken by MPs on the bill reflects how they feel about their position in government. It tells a story about how they feel about their constituents. It even tells a story about how they feel about democracy.

Let me explain. Canadians become a little sensitive when their politicians use U.S. examples. Nonetheless it is impossible to deny that U.S. experience provides us with an example of how representative democracy works: its problems and its benefits.

In the greatest document ever written to defend American democracy, the federalist papers, the authors speak in paper No. 35 of the qualifications of representatives in government. They write that representatives should be members of various classes of people from society and economy; that those people should be chosen by a majority of their constituents; that those people should be inspired by a desire to protect the interests of their class in the economy, to represent their communities; that those people should be elected for a very limited period of time, after which they should return to their former positions in the economy, back to their former places in life. People elected to government should be inspired and motivated to go into public life by a sincere commitment to their communities. They should expect nothing more than to represent their families, friends and neighbours.

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The model from the federalist papers does not speak of a class of professional politicians. No, the ideal politician is a real person from the real world who takes a short time out of his or her life to do his or her patriotic duty and represent his or her community with enough remuneration to survive but not enough to prosper. That would have to wait until his or her limited time in government was over and he or she returned to a former profession.

That is one model or one vision of what the government and legislators should do. There is another, that of the professional legislative class, one where legislators are not so much chosen as they are born or made and where there are different incentives to get into politics. I am not referring to the incentives of patriotism or a willingness to sacrifice for one's community but an ambition to achieve power, to establish oneself in powerful circles and to make money. Representation of the people for this kind of politician is nothing more than saying the right things to avoid being voted out of office and thereby losing the security, power and prestige that public life offers.

That is the sort of politician Canadians have learned to dislike so passionately. Canadians are more disillusioned than ever about their politicians. Politicians consistently rank at the bottom of public opinion poll surveys. People do not like us. When I ask my constituents what they do not like about politicians I consistently get the same answers: "Politicians are only in it for themselves. They only want to make money and get power. They lie all the time just to stay in office". That is quite a commentary.

(1645)

Is it any wonder people are fed up with politicians? Members of the House have expanded their powers, expanded their salaries and expanded their pensions without ever consulting the people of Canada. Members have expanded their power and their purses. They have created what some of the founders of modern democracy hope to avoid: the creation of a professional class of politicians more concerned about their comfort than about the needs of the community and the country. In other words, the politicians have become Ottawa's messengers to the constituents.

Here we are debating this pension reform bill. Some reform. This debate and the divergent attitudes and opinions of the two sides of the House—and I am not including the Bloc in my comments since it is absurd for the Bloc to even be participating in this debate—reflect more than just a different administrative view of how pensions should operate. They reflect a fundamentally different view of how Canadian democracy should operate.

The Reform Party believes in the first model of representation: non-professional politicians who represent their communities out of a sense of duty and patriotism, politicians who expect nothing more than to return to their stations in life with a

nod from their communities and the occasional "job well done". We want nothing more than to be given enough remuneration to survive while we are here and then go home to our communities with respect.

The Liberals on the other hand are concerned more about providing themselves with perks, power and pensions, pensions which have become the flashpoint of voter anger, and rightly so. Why should parliamentarians receive pensions which are richer than anything the private sector could even dream of? Why should citizens who are taxed to the max be forced to pay for this unbelievable scheme? The politicians in power across the way do not believe that politics should be about sacrifice for the country. They think the country should sacrifice for them. Liberal politicians do not ask what they can do for Canada, they ask what Canada can do for them. That bothers Canadians. That causes Canadians to lose faith in the political process.

The Reform Party's philosophy on pension reform is simple: do not give us one. Leave us alone. Go ahead and take the cushy pensions. Go ahead and force the taxpayer to cough up \$4 for every one. Clearly, that is what members across the way are saying, but leave us alone.

If their vision of democracy and representation is one which includes establishing a permanent class of highly paid, highly pensioned, highly perked politicians, then so be it. Let us represent our constituents the way we want. Allow us to be servants of the people rather than demanding that the taxpayers serve us. Let our visions co-exist. Let them compete. Then let the voters decide come the next election. We are more than happy with that.

This pension reform bill does not do that. It forces the next crop of Reform MPs to take this ultra rich pension package whether they want it or not. How absurd. How cynical.

Canadians want responsible government. They want responsible governors, people they can trust, people who will serve willingly because they want to serve, not because they want to retire after a few years on tens of thousands of dollars indexed to inflation. Being a member of Parliament is an opportunity to leave an indelible mark on this great country. It is an opportunity to give something back to the communities which have given us all so much. It is a privilege.

The current pension plan and the new pension package is a slap in the face. It is a slap in the face to all constituents and all communities. I urge my fellow members on both sides of the House to take a step toward restoring representation with integrity to Canada. Take a step in the direction of restoring trust. Vote no on the bill and vote yes to integrity and trust. I am going to opt out of the plan.

(1650)

Given the lack of interest on the Liberal side and the many inadequacies of Bill C-85, I move:

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That this debate be now adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker: This is not a debatable motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 213)

YEAS

Members

Abbott
Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville)
Brown (Calgary Southeast)
Duncan
Frazer
Grey (Beaver River)
Hanger
Harper (Simcoe Centre)
Hermanson
Hoepfner
Johnston
Meredith
Ramsay
Silye
Strahl
White (Fraser Valley West)

Ablonczy
Bridgman
Chatters
Epp
Gouk
Grubel
Harper (Calgary West)
Hayes
Hill (Macleod)
Jennings
Mayfield
Morrison
Ringma
Stinson
Thompson
Williams—32

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Arseneault
Asselin
Barnes
Bellemare
Bevilacqua
Blondin—Andrew
Bonin
Brien
Bryden
Bélisle
Catterall
Chamberlain
Collins
Crawford
de Jong
Dromisky
Dumas
Eggleton
Fewchuk
Finestone
Gagliano

Althouse
Assad
Bakopanos
Bellehumeur
Bergeron
Bhaduria
Bodnar
Boudria
Brown (Oakville—Milton)
Bélangier
Calder
Cauchon
Clancy
Cowling
Culbert
Discepola
Duhamel
Dupuy
English
Fillion
Flis
Gagnon (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine)

Galloway
Gerrard
Godin
Graham
Guamieri
Harb
Ianno
Jackson
Jordan
Knutson
Landry
Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry)
LeBlanc (Cape/Cap-Breton Highlands—Canso)
Lefebvre
Leroux (Sheffield)
MacLaren
Malhi
Martin (LaSalle—Émard)
McCormick
McLellan (Edmonton Northwest)
McWhinney
Milliken
Mitchell
Ménard
Nunez
Pagtakhan
Peric
Phinney
Pickard (Essex—Kent)
Proud
Regan
Ringuette—Maltais
Robillard
Rompkey
Serré
Skoke
Steckle
Stewart (Northumberland)
Taylor
Terrana
Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata)
Valeri
Venne
Volpe
Whelan

Gauthier (Roberval)
Godfrey
Goodale
Grose
Guimond
Harper (Churchill)
Irwin
Jacob
Keyes
Lalonde
Lastewka
Lavigne (Verdun—Saint-Paul)
Lee
Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe)
Loney
MacLellan (Cape/Cap-Breton—The Sydneys)
Maloney
Massé
McKinnon
McTeague
Mifflin
Minna
Murray
Nault
O'Reilly
Paradis
Peters
Picard (Drummond)
Pillitteri
Reed
Rideout
Robichaud
Rock
Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury)
Sheridan
St. Denis
Stewart (Brant)
Szabo
Telegdi
Torsney
Ur
Vanclief
Verran
Wappel
Zed—134

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Bachand
Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead)
Caccia
Chan
Chrétien (Saint-Maurice)
Collenette
Crête
DeVillers
Duceppe
Gaffney
Guay
Hubbard
Langlois
Lebel
Lincoln
MacDonald
O'Brien
Sauvageau
St-Laurent

Baker
Bouchard
Caron
Chrétien (Frontenac)
Cohen
Copp
Dalphond—Guiral
Dubé
Finlay
Gagnon (Québec)
Harvard
Kraft Sloan
Laurin
Leblanc (Longueuil)
MacAulay
Marchand
Plamondon
Speller
Tobin

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

HATE PROPAGANDA VIA ELECTRONIC HIGHWAY

The House resumed from March 31 consideration of the motion.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak today on the motion regarding hate speech on the Internet.

I agree wholeheartedly that the government should move with speed to adopt legislative measures aimed at stopping the spread of hate propaganda through computer networks.

The information highway is a wonderful resource, which provides education and information to people worldwide. The Internet is a powerful communication tool. It links people of various nations and backgrounds easily and rapidly, helping spread understanding and knowledge around the world.

Like many tools or new technologies, the information highway can be used for harmful purposes as easily as for positive purposes. Unfortunately, the many benefits provided by the new technology are as attractive to hatemongers and racists as they are to scientists and students.

As I am sure many members are aware, even a brief glance through various Internet discussion groups reveals material that is deeply offensive and contrary to Canadian values. The material ranges from recruiting messages from the Ku Klux Klan to pornography and Holocaust denial tracts.

In January a university student was arrested in Michigan for issuing threats after he posted a computer message describing how he wanted to torture, rape, and murder a fellow student. In a recent case in Calgary, police arrested a man for possession of child pornography that he had acquired from a computer bulletin board linked to the Internet.

It is true that in order to obtain much of the offensive material one has to go actively looking for the appropriate computer bulletin boards. However, some sources of pornography advertise their services in the computer discussion groups.

Although some work is required to find offensive material, pornography and hate propaganda often end up in the hands of impressionable children. As I am sure many members are aware,

children and young adults are often far more proficient with computers than their parents are. We should not underestimate the persistence of some children.

We need to develop software that would allow parents to screen material that comes into their homes or schools, similar to what we can now do on TV. Children should not have access to pornography through computer bulletin boards, just as they are not able to purchase pornography from local stores. Parents must be able to control what their children view.

There have been cases of white supremacists using computer bulletin boards to attempt to recruit new members, especially among students and other young adults. We do not tolerate white supremacists recruiting in person in our schools, so I see no reason to tolerate them sending their hate propaganda to school children through computers.

(1735)

Freedom of speech is one of our most important values. However, freedom of speech needs to be tempered by responsibility. It may be a cliché but it is nonetheless true that freedom of speech does not protect one's right to yell fire in a crowded theatre. In a similar fashion, freedom of speech does not protect hate speech. Canada already has laws dealing with the distribution of hate propaganda by conventional means such as books or on TV and radio broadcasts. However, our current laws are not having much impact on the electronic highway. So far there has not been a single case I am aware of brought against anyone spreading hate across computer networks.

Some users of the Internet have argued that they can regulate themselves. Certainly there are some examples of Internet users challenging and discrediting hatemongers. However, there is much offensive material out there. In a perfect world self-regulation would work; but as we all know, this is not a perfect world.

A combination of legislative action and self-regulation would perhaps be the best approach. We should encourage the development of a code of conduct among Internet users to discourage offensive E-mail and discussion groups. Some have likened the Internet to a town square or a worldwide debating forum. Just as there are accepted norms of conduct for discussions in public places, there should be norms of acceptable behaviour on the electronic highway.

Along with self-regulation, there should be some direction from Parliament. Canada's current laws are apparently having little effect on the electronic highway. The motion we are debating at the moment is needed to push for the expansion of current legislation to cover the Internet. This motion may not have any legislative authority, but it will demonstrate this House's desire and will to limit the spread of pornography and

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hate propaganda. It will provide the courts with some guidance as to the option of the House of Commons regarding this issue.

I compliment the Minister of Justice for his statement last week at an international conference on crime prevention in Cairo, where he said that the government is considering new laws to limit the harmful use of computer networks and other forms of communication.

I believe this motion will encourage this government and others to continue their efforts to find a way to limit the spread of hate propaganda and pornography through the Internet. We need to encourage international cooperation to deal with the spread of hate propaganda.

Given the worldwide nature of the Internet, regulation will require worldwide effort. It will be difficult to limit pornography and hate propaganda if what is banned in one country is easily available through a computer bulletin board in another country. Just as hate groups are cooperating in order to spread their hatred of others, all countries must unite to combat hate groups.

I am well aware that it will not be easy to find ways to attack the spread of offensive items on the information highway. However, just because something is difficult it does not mean that we should not try. At the very least, by passing this motion we will send a message to the hatemongers and pornographers in the Internet that their messages are not welcome in Canada.

I congratulate the member for Winnipeg North for having the foresight and initiative to bring forward this motion encouraging us to give serious thought to this matter. I hope all members of this House will support this motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Motion No. 384 tabled by the hon. member for Winnipeg North requiring the government to move with speed to adopt legislative measures aimed at stopping the spread of hate propaganda via the electronic information highway while simultaneously preserving the legitimate use of the freedom of speech.

I would like to express my support for this motion immediately and I congratulate my colleague for Winnipeg North on this excellent private member's initiative.

As a member of a minority and a fighter for human rights since my youth, I am very much attuned to the fight against hate propaganda. I worked for many years with the union movement, which was behind the fight against racism and discrimination. I was also on the board of directors of the Quebec Civil Liberties Union. Many messages of hate and intolerance are directed at minorities, particularly visible minorities.

(1740)

We must fight hateful, racist and discriminatory remarks expressed in all sorts of ways, including those appearing on the Internet.

Information technology is advancing by leaps and bounds. Thanks to the computer network, of which Internet is the latest and most impressive example, we can be in instant contact with people on other continents and in distant countries.

Internet currently comprises over 30,000 networks, 2.5 million computers and 35 million users in over 100 countries. These figures are rapidly increasing. A computer, a modem and a telephone are all it takes to access this information highway.

The Internet network can transmit documents, images, voice, music, films and so on.

Many Canadian firms are involved in setting up electronic highways, including Bell Canada, Northern Telecom, Unitel, Videotron, Rogers Communications, Stentor and the Sprint group.

These new technologies, however, cause considerable concern in some sectors of society as the media point out increasingly. What we have here, in some respects, is a public debate on certain basic moral values of the highest importance. All democratic societies must combat racism, discrimination and hatred. On the other hand, they must also protect freedom of speech and expression, and every person's right to respect, dignity and equality.

But, the state is not always well equipped to rise to the challenges brought on by the rapid and overwhelming development of new information technologies. I think that the motion introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North is of great merit, for it opens up discussion in this House on this very important issue.

Under our justice system, it is section 163 of the Criminal Code which governs obscenity and section 319 which governs the distribution of hate propaganda. The first provision, more particularly subsection 163(1), states that "Every one commits an offence who makes, prints, publishes, distributes, circulates, or has in his possession for the purpose of publication, distribution or circulation any obscene written matter, picture, model, phonograph record or other thing whatever". This subsection deals with mechanical or electronic means.

On the other hand, section 319 states that "Every one who, by communicating statements in any public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty—". The provision describes two situations giving rise to a criminal offence: "(a) inciting hatred by communicating, in any public place, statements that may lead to a breach of the peace", and "(b) promoting hatred against any identifiable group by communicating statements other than in private conversation".

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Are these provisions adequate to deal with the problems identified? For some people they are, but not for me. I should mention that our Criminal Code applies only in Canada, but the situation we are describing goes beyond our borders.

(1745)

The problem is an international one, and it is therefore necessary to promote international co-operation on this issue. Incidentally, Canada has signed international conventions that could apply to this area. The two most important ones are the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, ratified in 1947, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified in 1976.

Hate messages may be sent from any country. It is therefore desirable to draft and adopt international guidelines for the use of the Information Highway.

The matter should even be taken up at the UN. The U.S. Congress is now examining a bill that deals with the proliferation of this kind of information on the Internet. One of the provisions of this bill provides for fines of up to \$100,000 if a person uses a computer to annoy, insult, threaten or harass. I think this is an interesting proposal, and I also think a certain amount of co-operation between Canada and the United States would be desirable in this respect.

I support the suggestion made by the mover of this motion that we should adopt a code of conduct for suppliers of services on Internet and provide for a complaints mechanism.

The authorities should also start a campaign to educate the public and Internet users and suppliers on the right way to use the Information Highway and their responsibilities in this respect.

Users and service suppliers should also exercise a certain amount of self-discipline and restraint. So far, there have been no instances of legal action in Canada. The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada must be vigilant when dealing with statements inciting hatred, violence and prejudice that are transmitted on the Internet. These hate messages constitute statements in the meaning of section 319 of the Criminal Code. The government should table legislation in Parliament to deal specifically with such cases.

The government must act immediately. We must fight racism, discrimination and intolerance. We must fight neo-Nazi groups, extreme rightist groups that promote white supremacy, anti-semitic groups, the Klu Klux Klan and all other groups that promote this kind of prejudice, and finally, all those who use the Information Highway to spread hate propaganda.

I therefore support this motion.

[English]

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the very timely topic of Motion No. 384 today, that the House move with speed to adopt legislative measures aimed at stopping the spread of hate propaganda via the electronic information highway while preserving the legitimate use of freedom of speech and expression. If legislation is passed on this issue the government will inherit a truly enormous task.

I stand in support of this motion because we must always be fighting against wrong wherever we find it. Due to the increasing accessibility of illegal material directed especially at our young people we must struggle even harder to protect impressionable minds from feeding and growing on a diet of hatred, ignorance and fear.

I have a person in my constituency who has received quite a bit of publicity lately. This man is a young, white supremacist connected with militant American groups and, as the media loves to do, he was featured on television a few weeks ago. He said that he hates the government with a perfect hatred.

(1750)

While I may have my own problems with the government, it certainly does not deserve hatred. The very fact that this fellow was allowed to say what he said on national television without being thrown in jail shows that he is obviously wrong in his beliefs.

In a great many other countries he would be more justified in making such venomous diatribes. In Canada it is easy to grab the spotlight and heap abuse on our system even while standing within the shadow of a benevolent government. I would be interested to know if he not only derives his freedom, but also gets his living from the very government that he says he despises.

I was reminded of this outrageous philosophy at our local V-E Day remembrance day services I attended last weekend. Together we remembered the millions of young soldiers who dashed all their hopes and dreams against Hitler's mightiest armies, the man who attempted to put the whole world under his jackboot.

Hitler did not care about the Canadians, the Europeans, the Americans, the countless Asians who died. He did not even care about his own people. He cared about power. He used young, impressionable, dissatisfied men, like the man from my constituency, to get it for him. Many of them died along with their leader in the second world war.

It is an incredible irony that the very system that tens of millions of people fought to the death to preserve is now being used to shelter someone like this, who promotes Hitler's philosophy. It stands as yet another proof of the incredible strength and essential goodness of our political system. While we must

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preserve this freedom, we must also preserve the stability of the system. Otherwise all those soldiers would have died in vain.

As the human body tolerates all sorts of germs, it also struggles against infections. Our society is like an organism that plays host to all sorts of philosophies but it, too, has the right to guard against those which are most destructive.

Hate literature and hate propaganda on the Internet are like pollution washing up on a seashore. Although we may never get rid of all the pollution, we must always keep cleaning the sand on our portion of the beach or else eventually we will be buried in the pollution. More and more hate literature is washing up on our personal shores, in our homes and businesses each and every day. We must actively battle it or risk having impressionable people won over by it.

Those who would claim an untrammelled right of freedom to use the Internet for any purpose stand on shifting ground. They would never claim that right in other areas. For instance, no one acknowledges the right of bank robbers to use our system of roads with complete freedom. Every time bank robbers use our highways to get away, the police do their utmost to stop this abuse of freedom. It should be the same when one travels the information highway.

To use another analogy, no one would claim that the government has no right to regulate the use of poisons in the marketplace, to pass laws to make sure that the poisons do not sit on a shelf alongside the food that we must purchase. Likewise, there are poisonous thoughts that should never sit on the shelf beside harmless chat groups and information libraries on the Internet.

There is a difference between freedom and licence. Freedom is simply the right to do whatever is good but licence is the abuse of that right in order to harm others. In the case of the Internet, the definition of harm becomes all important.

One of the hardest things is to define an intellectual crime where victims do not suffer physical or monetary loss. Should all white supremacist material be thought of as hate literature? Is pornography hate literature? Are religious messages that decry the actions of a person or a group based on a legitimate sense of moral offence hate literature? How can one determine the degree of hatred? Is just a little bit of hatred okay? It is very difficult to define a hate crime.

The next problem we encounter is very nearly insurmountable. That is the matter of enforcement. The member for Winnipeg North is perhaps suggesting the most difficult of all possible tasks, an act of global regulation.

Internet messages are nearly anonymous. There are trillions of possible hiding places in the Internet. The sources of hate literature are limitless and the criminals can be located any-

where in the world. If one is found and prosecuted within Canadian borders, 1,000 can take his place from any other country.

Obviously any regulation of the Internet would require international co-operation and it could only hope to drive the worst offenders underground. I note with satisfaction the Liberal House leader was reported on March 28 to have spoken favourably about an international agreement to stop the flow of this material into Canada. That would be necessary.

(1755)

We want to avoid a vast bureaucracy of Internet police hired to listen to private conversations. If a police force was able to listen to all private telephone conversations, we would think it was a terrible abuse of human rights. I would certainly think so as well. All kinds of offensive things are communicated every day in person or over the telephone lines. People have a right to their privacy even when they say bad or ridiculous things.

However, the difference between personal communication and the Internet is that personal communications are inaccessible to all but the communicating parties. Through news groups the Internet makes essentially private conversations and communications available to anyone. That makes the Internet a thing of beauty and a beast at the same time.

A partial answer is in international agreements but perhaps the most effective answer lies in the actions of the people of goodwill who might act as volunteer watchdogs on the Internet. Millions of people read each other's thoughts each day and comment on them. Thousands of users can get together and electronically sanction someone who abuses the information highway.

This volunteer policing effort holds real promise for cleaning up the Internet, but once again that careful balance between free speech and responsible speech must be preserved, providing room for legitimate disagreements. That is why I think the most effective action the government could take is not legislative.

Government could get the best bang for its buck by supporting the development of a set of Internet conventions or broadly based rules. Call them operating rules, call them a public code of conduct or electronic ethics. These guiding principles would suggest to users when they should report to police, when they should simply reproach the sender or when they should band together to sanction another user.

Most Internet users around the world are responsible people, despite the horror stories we read in the newspapers. If there are vastly more responsible people than irresponsible ones, then it should be simple to obtain their co-operation in stopping the spread of material that is illegal.

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The government could sponsor a small advisory group to take leadership in this area, to draft these voluntary Internet conventions using the legal assistance that government can provide and have the group go global on the Internet with its proposals, not working necessarily from government to government but from user to user. Let users decide among themselves what should be allowed and what should not.

Winston Churchill said in a speech at Harvard University in 1943 that the empires of the future are empires of the mind. This has never been more true than in the case of the Internet. At the moment it is purely an intellectual kingdom, but thoughts are powerful. Ideas in cyberspace translate into real world action and an Internet kingdom without laws will one day generate lawless deeds.

If the government passes laws to prosecute the worst offenders and helps to develop conventions for voluntary action on the Internet, this intellectual kingdom will become one of peace and safety. We can hope for nothing better for us and for our children than to experience that peace.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North. I applaud his efforts on behalf of Canadians in bringing this to the attention of the House and moving to take an important step by recommending we take action and move forward in abolishing hate and hateful messages on the information highway.

It is clearly not an easy aspect to consider as the Internet is travelled and is accessible from anywhere in the world. It is important subject matter and an important area for us to be concerned about as our children increasingly participate in and use the Internet and computers generally.

We must think not only of Canadians. Our messages travel around the world. We must think about people in other countries as well. Canada is a society that has grown and developed a very important ethic of tolerance, an ethic in which we disagree with those who tend to promote hate. We would like this concept of tolerance that we have developed in Canada to be spread around the world through media like the Internet through approaches like the worldwide web.

(1800)

Let us keep in mind at the moment that the problem is relatively small. At this point only a tiny proportion of the 5,000 Usenet discussion groups have any problems that might come under this concept of hateful material.

Nevertheless, it is important because of the rapidity with which the Internet is expanding, which it is estimated now reaches some 40 million people around the world, that we start to move in this area. In doing so, I think it is important to first

recognize that there are areas under the current telecommunications legislation and regulations where offensive and unsolicited content or messages can be dealt with.

For example, under section 8.2 of Bell Canada's terms of service which sets out the basic rights and obligations of telephone companies and their subscribers, customers are prohibited from using the public telephone network in a way that is contrary to law for the purpose of making annoying or offensive calls. Originators of such calls, hate or racist messages on a telephone answering machine can be prosecuted. The public can file complaints with the telephone company or the CRTC who will pursue these investigations.

Section 41 of the Telecommunications Act authorizes the CRTC to take regulatory steps to protect consumers against possible abuses from unsolicited telecommunications, computerized solicitations or junk faxes which may contain offensive content. Under this section, the commission introduced regulations restricting the use of automatic dialling and announcing devices for the purpose of broadcasting commercial messages, as well as various safeguards to protect consumers against unsolicited messages such as call blocking. While not intended specifically to control the dissemination of offensive content, these regulations can nonetheless be used to discourage abuses in this area.

Section 36 of the Telecommunications Act gives the commission some latitude in allowing telecommunications carriers to take into account the content or the message it carries over its facilities.

A case in point is the commission's approval of a number of safeguards to protect consumers, particularly children, against unwanted exposure over the 900 number telephone service which delivers audiotext services, including so-called adult entertainment.

The commission granted the telephone companies some discretion to refuse to provide billing and collection service to certain 900 service operations which in the opinion of the telephone company offer a program or service which does not comply with the program content guidelines approved by the commission. This forces the service provider to use an alternative billing method such as credit card billing, prepayment or some other approach which provides greater control by consumers over the use of the service. The CRTC has also provided a number of other protection measures, including the provision of call blocking of 900 service upon request.

Consequently, in situations where the material is not illegal under the Criminal Code there may still be levers to block, control or limit its dissemination.

There is of course no reason to believe that the Criminal Code itself cannot be used on the information highway, although to date it has not been so applied, but it remains there. It is an area

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which as in other forms of communication, print media, et cetera, can certainly potentially be used.

Under the information highway advisory council there are some initiatives already under way. The advisory council, which we appointed last year, has been looking at this area along with a number of other areas in terms of how Canada should have solid initiatives and policies in the area of the information highway.

(1805)

At its most recent meeting on April 21 the council brought forward for third reading a four-pronged approach to the limitation or attack on any hate messages which might be found on the information highway. The four-pronged approach includes attention to law enforcement in this area, to the development of a code of ethics as it applies to the information highway, and also education and public awareness. This area is growing very rapidly in use. It is important for school children and people in communities and for all Canadians to develop an awareness of what the media is, how it works, and the limitations and advantages of it.

Another approach is the technological approach. It is rather interesting that the technology to block, monitor or interfere with hate messages and hate propaganda is something which is coming. It may provide users of the information highway with approaches that will be very useful in the future.

With regard to the already existing legislative measures, I would like to talk about four points briefly.

Criminal Code sections 318 to 320 may apply. Also section 13 of the human rights act can apply. One problem is that computers on the Internet do not recognize international boundaries. It would therefore be rather difficult unless there are common international standards, regulations or laws to control it when it originates from other countries. There may be potential for bilateral and multilateral arrangements. This is something that could and should be pursued.

The second prong of the approach suggested by the Information Highway Advisory Council deals with development of a code of ethics. Other areas of communication, for example many of the established media industries such as broadcasting, cable television and sound recording have successfully adopted voluntary guidelines to deal with offensive content. We feel it is advisable to move in this area on the information highway.

The third prong of the council's strategy deals with public awareness, an important initiative which we need to undertake. It also deals with technological approaches which can be used to block transmission to allow schools and parents to filter content coming into homes and schools. I think we will see these sorts of filters more widely used. These can be very helpful in allowing individual Canadians to control access and content coming to them.

These sorts of initiatives are coming from the Information Highway Advisory Council. This is a grassroots move and is strongly supported by my hon. colleague for Winnipeg North. The motion is an important step forward. I support it and think we can move forward together and create an electronic world which is not only exciting, but is also one which is ethical.

Mr. Gurbax Singh Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the motion by the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

The information highway has the potential to become one of the most glorious tools ever imagined, providing links between people all over the globe. Its potential for positive interaction for the sharing of information and ideas and education is unlimited.

(1810)

How tragic to think of it instead as a tool for those who would use it to spread their own malicious, bigoted, racist ideas, particularly to our children. I have read some of the vile messages these people have posted. The thought that my children might also read them makes me sick at heart.

Canada has long had a reputation as a tolerant and compassionate nation, accepting with open arms immigrants and refugees from all over the world. Many of these people have fled their homelands to escape persecution. Many were being persecuted on the basis of their race alone. They have come to this great country believing that at long last they will be free to live their lives in peace. I can only imagine their horror when they discover their young children innocently tapping into a cesspool of hate propaganda.

What of our older citizens who have lived through the unspeakable horrors of the second world war, some as fighters in our armed forces, some as victims of the madness of the Nazis? This year and this week in particular we are remembering the end of the second world war in Europe 50 years ago. We are once again celebrating the victories of those men and women who fought so valiantly to make the world safe for democracy. We are remembering those who lost their lives so that we could live in freedom and dignity. Were these sacrifices for nothing? Do we not owe it to them to continue the fight?

Our veterans came back to Canada from the war with an understanding of what happens when one group of people determines that another is inferior to themselves. They saw firsthand the inhumanity man can inflict on his brother in the name of nationalism and racial superiority. They taught their children and their children taught their children the importance of tolerance for the beliefs of others. How sad that their great-grandchildren are being targeted for this misinformation. How sad that the very first information they might receive about

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the Holocaust could be misinformation from a revisionist intent on reviling the Jewish people.

People have fought and died to preserve the rights and freedoms we enjoy in this country, but they did not fight and die to preserve the right of one group of people to defame the reputation of another. They did not fight and die so a skinhead using equipment at a publicly funded university could call into question the rights of Asian and black people to live in freedom and bear children.

Freedom of speech and expression is one of the most important and basic rights of all Canadians, but it is not a right without limitation. We have laws in this country prohibiting the public incitement of hatred. These people are breaking our laws.

We have heard that the users of the Internet are a self-policing group and are flooding those who are spreading hatred with messages countering their arguments. I commend these people for caring enough to try to counteract the hate propaganda, but my concern is that these messages are still being received. Right now it seems impossible to stop the perpetrators of hate propaganda on the Internet. That is why it is so important to start looking for solutions immediately.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North has suggested a number of areas in which the Canadian government can begin looking for solutions. I am in full agreement with all of these sugges-

tions, particularly his suggestion that these measures must be taken immediately. Time is of the essence. We must stop this flow of hateful and hurtful information now. The information highway must be a conduit where all people feel welcome.

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly I am very delighted over the last two hours of debate on the motion to have observed a unanimity of hearts and minds on this very crucial issue. I feel a resolve on the part of Parliament not to allow hate in Canada. It is a commitment to a fundamental Canadian value.

On that note, I would appreciate it if you would seek unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to adopt the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6.17 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

(The House adjourned at 6.17 p.m.)

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